Mrs. Lyster.

AN

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF THE

IRISH STAGE;

FROM THE

EARLIEST PERIOD DOWN TO THE CLOSE OF THE SEASON 1788.

INTERSPERSED WITH

THEATRICAL ANECDOTES,

AND AN

OCCASIONAL REVIEW

OF THE

IRISH DRAMATIC AUTHORS AND ACTORS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

By ROBERT HITCHCOCK,
OF THE THEATRE-ROYAL, DUBLIN.

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PREFACE.

BEFORE we enter upon the immediate ſubject matter of the preſent volume, a few words ſeem neceſſary, partly by way of explanation, partly of apology.

The delay which has attended the publication of it ſeems to ſuggeſt itſelf as the firſt ſubject of remark. For this, and indeed, for moſt of the errors and imperfections of the work, the author has but one excuſe to offer: the unceaſing buſtle and diſtraction of an occupation, of which none but thoſe who have experienced it, can form an adequate conception. It was his intention that the preſent volume ſhould have immediately, or at leaſt by a very ſhort interval, followed the former. But

the reaſon alledged has put it totally out of his power to accompliſh it ſooner than he has done.

The ſame excuſe, he hopes, will be extended to the many deficiencies under which he is conſcious the work labours. Several circumſtances concur to render the volume now ſubmitted to public inſpection, of a nature more difficult and more delicate, than that of the preceding. The period which it compriſes coming ſo much nearer to the preſent day, muſt of courſe involve events more within the recollection of many perſons living, and circumſtances in which their perſonal feelings may frequently be intereſted. In ſuch a caſe, ſhould any thing chance to have been miſrepreſented, he requeſts the error may be imputed to the ſingle cauſe already alledged; want of ſufficient leiſure. He has endeavoured to be as accurate as poſſible. If he has failed, it has been through ignorance, not intention.

With

With reſpect to the perſons mentioned in the following pages, many of them are ſtill living, many have their ſurviving friends. To the feelings of theſe ſeveral perſons he hopes that nothing which is there related can give offence. In ſpeaking both of characters and events, the attainment of truth has been his conſtant endeavour. In all caſes, which would admit of the alternative, he has even leaned to the ſide of praiſe, rather than to that of cenſure.

Another objection which may probably be raiſed againſt the preſent volume, is that it is incomplete. The original propoſals for the work, and even the title page itſelf, profeſs to come down to the end of the year 1788. The preſent volume cloſes with the year 1774. For this deficiency the nature of the ſubject muſt be the excuſe. The nearer we approached to the time in which we live, the greater was the number of circumſtances known, and neceſſary to be related.

The

PREFACE.

The endeavour of the writer has been rather to compreſs than to diffuſe facts. Yet even ſo, the period at firſt marked out was found to contain more than was expected, and more than would fall within the ordinary limits of a volume. The reaſon why the year 1774 in particular has been choſen for a termination, is that the ſeaſon preceding had been remarkable both for its ſucceſs and its excellence, and that the ſtage of Ireland had at that time attained a diſtinguiſhed degree of eminence. For in the choice of a reſting place, it is natural to fix on that which affords the faireſt proſpect. Whether the work ſhall be thought worthy of further continuance will be matter for public opinion.

Such as it is, the author ſubmits the following volume to inſpection. He is as conſcious as any perſon can be, of its defects. But he is perſuaded that it will meet with every candid indulgence.

4, Clarendon-street,
1ſt, May, 1794.

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Situation of the two Theatres at the end of the year 1759—Mr. Brown assumes the direction of Smock-Alley—The Crow-street Managers engage Mr. Mossop and Mr. Foote—Are appointed deputy masters of the revels—List of their company—New performers—Miss Rosco—Miss Osborne—Honoured by the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Dorset—Mossop opens in Zanga—Barry in Orestes—Foote in Fondlewife—Reception of Admiral Saunders at the Theatre.

THE detail of events, with which the former volume of this work concluded, has brought us to the termination of the theatrical campaign in May 1759. We have been there presented

with that variety of unexpected and of unhappy occurrences by which Mr. Sheridan, after the continued exertions of many ſucceſſive years to ſuſtain the dignity of the dramatic throne of this kingdom, was at once compelled to reſign its ſeptre, and to yield its empire to his more fortunate competitors. The period, therefore, which has been mentioned, ſaw Meſſrs. Barry and Woodward in unrivalled poſſeſſion, exulting in the plenitude of their theatric power.

Fluſhed with this extraordinary ſucceſs, and highly elate with their conqueſts, the joint managers of Crow-ſtreet, beheld, in imagination, their utmoſt wiſhes accompliſhed, and looked forward to a long ſeries of years, in which they hoped to reap the harveſt which ſmiled to them in proſpect.

It might, indeed, have been reaſonably expected, that thus victorious, crowned with public favour, with ſo excellent a company as they then commanded, and with ſuch brilliant future views, they had attained the ſummit of their deſires, and that oppoſition, ſo completely foiled, muſt ceaſe her fruitleſs efforts, and entirely leave the field to ſo powerful and re-

ſiſtleſs

ſiſtleſs an enemy. Far different however were the conſequences.

The diſtreſſed and ſhattered remains of the Smock-alley company were ſtill to be provided for: But without a leader nothing could poſſibly be done. Various were the conferences held for the attainment of this object, innumerable were the projects formed, yet teeming with almoſt inſurmountable difficulties. However live they muſt, and ſome meaſure muſt be adopted with ſpeed: Every eye ſeemed turned upon Mr. Brown, as their laſt hope. Indeed, his known indolence of temper and extreme inattention to buſineſs, little qualified him for ſuch a ſtation as conductor of a Theatre; but his extraordinary abilities as an actor, the reputation he had ſo juſtly acquired with the town, joined to his knowledge of the ſtage, overbalanced theſe defects, and ſeemed, in ſome meaſure, to qualify him for this peculiarly arduous taſk. On his part, his fortunes were deſperate. He had not any thing to loſe, and might, if fortune ſmiled, reap ſome temporary advantage.

Deſperate ſituations, require deſperate exertions, and what, at one time, prudence would

condemn, at others, neceſſity juſtifies and ſanctions. No ſooner therefore was this, almoſt hopeleſs, project formed, than it was inſtantly embraced. Almoſt every performer in the theatre enliſted under the banner of this new monarch, and promiſed their utmoſt aſſiſtance.

Mr. Brown then commenced his reign by entering into treaty with Mr. Sheridan, for the poſſeſſion of the forlorn and deſerted domains of Smock-alley, for the enſuing winter. Tho' there appeared ſo little proſpect of ſucceſs, yet, as there was no other reſource, Mr. Sheridan was contented to reſign to him his dominions, with their every remaining appendage, upon very moderate conditions.

The principal object being thus accompliſhed, it was next reſolved to ſpend the intervening time, previous to the winter ſeaſon, at Cork and Limerick, where they might have leiſure to meliorate their plan, and deviſe the beſt methods of carrying it into execution. Accordingly, the remainder of the company, except Mr. Digges, and Mrs. Ward, who returned to Edingburh, in in a ſhort time after, repaired to Cork, where

they

they continued to perform for ſeveral weeks, with tolerable ſucceſs.

This unforeſeen ſtorm, however, did not diſcourage the Crow-ſtreet managers; the oppoſition wore an aſpect too feeble to create a ſerious alarm. Yet, however they might deſpiſe the impotence of the attack, like prudent generals, they provided againſt the next campaign, with ſuch foreſight, as left very little hopes for the moſt ſanguine friends of the oppoſite party. Immediately on the cloſe of the ſeaſon, Mr. Sowdon ſailed for England and was quickly followed by Mr. Woodward and Mr. Barry, who haſtened up to London, where they entered into treaty with every performer of eminence whom they had any chance of engaging.

Their company, in the mean time, repaired to their reſpective ſummer engagements, which chiefly lay at Cheſter, Mancheſter, Liverpool, and other principal towns contiguous to the Iriſh coaſts; theſe performers were principally, Mr. and Mrs. Dancer, Mr. and Mrs. Jefferſon, Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy, Mr. Iſaac Sparks, Mr. Carmichael, &c.

Mr.

Mr. King, to the great regret of his numerous admirers in this kingdon, returned to London, where he made his firſt appearance at Drury-lane Theatre, in the October following, 1759, in Tom in the Conſcious Lovers.

The new managers, on their arrival in London, found little difficulty in their applications. The names of Barry and Woodward had great weight in their negociations: ſucceſs had eſtabliſhed their characters, and fame, the ſure attendant on victory, had prepared for them a moſt flattering reception.

The only perſon, who could materially oppoſe them, was, Mr. Moſſop. He had been now abſent upwards of two years from Ireland; his reputation, on leaving that kingdom, was equal to any actor's on the ſtage, and the eſtimation he at preſent ſtood in with the London audience added highly to his character. 'Twas no eaſy taſk to accommodate the buſineſs to his inclinations, but he was too dangerous a rival to ſtand on punctilio with.

Fortunately, they found him in a mood not altogether friendly to Mr. Garrick, and, conſequently,

quently, better diſpoſed to liſten to their propoſals. Great and unrivalled as the Roſcius was, yet was he not ſuperior to the ſtings of envy. The riſing fame of Mr. Moſſop appeared to have excited in him ſome ſuch ſenſation, and it was whilſt under this impreſſion, that the Crow-ſtreet managers addreſſed the former.

In an evil hour to himſelf did he yield to their ſolicitations, and they had the addreſs quickly to ſettle every thing to his ſatisfaction. He made his own terms, and the parts in Tragedy were to be divided between him and Mr. Barry in a very judicious manner.

Thus did a little pique urge him to a ſtep he had ever after reaſon to repent, and plunge him into difficulties, diſtreſs, and poverty, which ended but with his life: whereas, had he remained at Drury-lane, there could not have been a doubt but his extraordinary merit would ſpeedily have placed him above every competitor but Mr. Garrick, and crowned him with the fullneſs both of fortune and of fame.

This capital point gained, they next turned their thoughts towards Mr. Foote, whoſe great faſhion and popularity pointed him out as a very

proper

proper auxiliary at the commencement of the enſuing ſeaſon. They engaged him for a certain number of nights, during which he was to perform thoſe pieces of his own writing then in ſuch reputation, and to bring out his Taſte and Minor, neither of which had ever been exhibited in Ireland.

By the beginning of the following September the managers had nearly completed their recruiting buſineſs. Several other engagements, which the future pages will bring forward, were completed, and on the 7th of the above month Mr. Woodward arrived in Dublin, with expectations, as ſanguine, and as flattering, as the warmeſt fancy could ſuggeſt.

That thoſe expectations were founded on reaſon and probability, will be ſeen by a ſlight review of their recommendations. Their company was perhaps the ſtrongeſt, and beſt formed, of any hitherto beheld in Ireland. High in public favour, their credit eſtabliſhed, a new theatre, an excellent wardrobe, they had every advantage which could be derived from a combination of circumſtances ſo fortunate. To crown theſe, and give animation to the whole, they were in

a very

a very eminent degree poſſeſſed of every influence which the court could give. Robert Wood, Eſq; then maſter of the revels in this kingdom, appointed Mr. Barry and Mr. Woodward his deputies: by which act Crow-ſtreet became the theatre royal. Mr. Wood alſo conferred upon them the office of directors of his Majeſty's band; a poſt indeed of more honour than profit: but their principal dependance lay on the new Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Dorſet. He was remarkably popular, and his countenance muſt add uncommon weight to the party he eſpouſed. In this reſpect they were not deceived. The Duke and Ducheſs of Dorſet were peculiarly fond of the theatre, and honoured it with their preſence once or twice every week during the ſeaſon.

Thus powerfully prepared, they took the field early in the ſeaſon. Mr. Barry remained in London, to finiſh his buſineſs there, and to wait the leiſure of Mr. Moſſop, who had agreed to accompany him on his return. Mr. Woodward, in the mean time, opened the theatre on Wedneſday, October 3d 1759, with a new occaſional prologue in the character of Rumour, written purpoſely to defeat the oppoſition formed againſt

them, and ſpoken by Mr. Woodward with great point and force. The play was the Comedy of

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

Mirabel - -	by Mr. Dexter,
Fainall - -	- Mr. Sowdon,
Witwood - -	- Mr. Jefferſon,
Petulant - -	- Mr. Whyte,
Waitwell - -	- Mr. Walker,
Sir Wilful Witwood	- Mr. Sparks.
Marwood - -	- Mrs. Kennedy,
Mrs. Fainall -	- Mrs. Jefferſon,
Lady Wiſhfort -	- Mrs. Mynitt,
Mincing - -	- Mrs. Younger,
Millimant - -	- Mrs. Dancer.

With the Farce of

THE MOCK DOCTOR.

Mock Doctor -	- Mr. Sparks,
Dorcas - -	- Mrs. Pye.

The houſe was tolerably full, and both pieces received with applauſe.

But,

But, as the above bill does not by any means convey to the public a juſt idea of the numbers or merits of the company, I ſhall, for their further information, ſubjoin the following liſt:

Mr. Barry,
Mr. Woodward,
Mr. Moſſop,
Mr. Foote,
Mr. Dexter,
Mr. Sowdon,
Mr. Heaphy,
Mr. Sparks,
Mr. Vernon,
Mr. Jefferſon,
Mr. Walker,
Mr. Glover,
Mr. R. Elrington,
Mr. Whyte,
Mr. Read,
Mr. Mynitt,
Mr. Younger,

Mr. Fiſher,
Mr. Fiſher, jun.
Mr. Hamilton,
Mr. Knipe,
Mr. Morris,
Mr. Hayes,
Mr. Corry,
Mr. Olivier,
Mr. Layfield,
Mr. Meſſink,
Mr. Aldridge,
Mr. Mahon,
Mr. Harvey,
Mr. Stageldoir,
Mr. Carmichael,
Prompter.

Mrs. Dancer,
Mrs. Fitzhenry,
Mrs. Kennedy,
Miſs Oſborne,

Mrs. Knipe,
Mrs. Pye,
Mrs. Younger.
Mrs. Packenham,

Mrs.

Mrs. Jefferſon,
Miſs Maſon,
Miſs Roſco,
Mrs. Chambers,
Mrs. Walker,
Miſs Whyte,
Mrs. Mynitt,
Signiora Coralina and her mother.

From the above ſtatement I am led to make the following obſervations, though they are ſomewhat premature:—So heavy and numerous a company had never before been collected for Dublin; the conſequences were obvious, the receipts of the theatre were not at that time nor, indeed, have they ever been ſince equal to the ſupport of ſo enormous an expence. The weekly payments to performers alone, often amounted to upwards of 170l. excluſive of tradeſmens bills, and ſervants ſalaries which many times were not leſs than 200l. more. The Theatre had not then, nor perhaps ever will, attain in this kingdom a degree of opulence ſufficient to juſtify ſuch expenditures; the public cannot in reaſon expect it; and the manager, who thus launches out into ſuch extravagance, will too late feel the conſequences of his imprudence. The preſent inſtance juſtifies theſe reflections. At the end of one of the moſt ſucceſsful ſeaſons ever then known, Mr. Barry and Mr. Woodward found

found themſelves greatly deficient, a deficiency which every year increaſed, till in the end it involved them in total ruin.

But to return. Every thing ſeemed to wear a propitious aſpect with the new Theatre-royal Crow ſtreet. The town was highly pleaſed with the houſe, company, and the performances. So many difficulties had Mr. Brown to ſtruggle with that his moſt zealous partizans could entertain but little hopes of his being able to open Smock-alley. Almoſt every night produced ſome novelty at Crow-ſtreet, and the ſeveral exhibitions were in general well attended. A Signior Lucca Fabiano, a dancer, made his firſt appearance after the Beggars Opera, early in the ſeaſon: his abilities were of the moderate kind, and could not be put in competition with Mr. Aldridge, then beginning to be a great favourite, and who, in one particular ſtile of dancing, was ſuperior to any man in Europe.

A few nights after two young ladies made their debut in the comedy of Love makes a man. A Miſs Roſco in the part of Narciſſa, and a Miſs Oſborne in that of Amanda, and both were received with a moderate ſhare of applauſe.

Miſs

Miſs Roſco was the daughter of an actor of that name, of ſome eminence in the theatic world. This young lady had many claims on the pnblic. Her figure and features, tho' full, and rather maſculine, were well adapted to the ſtage—ſhe had ſpirit, and poſſeſſed pleaſing muſical powers. Her forte lay principally in lively comedy, and ſinging characters, ſuch as Lucy in the Beggars Opera. She remained ſeveral years in this kingdom eſteemed and reſpected; at length, being rather diſguſted at the ſituation in which ſhe was, ſhe reſolved to try another. Having received an excellent education, and being miſtreſs of many elegant accompliſhments, ſhe quitted the ſtage, and returned to Bath, where ſhe opened a boarding ſchool for young ladies, which ſhe conducted with the higheſt reputation and greateſt ſucceſs. Miſs Oſborne was of a reſpectable Engliſh family; the misfortunes and death of her father, obliged her mother to retire with this, her only daughter to Dublin, where ſhe lived with prudence and oeconomy. If fame is to be credited, the ſame chance which gave the abilities of Mrs. Oldfield to the world, diſcovered thoſe of Miſs Oſborne. A gentleman of much theatrical knowledge, by accident one day overheard her reading the play of Venice Preſerved to her mother;

ſtruck

ſtruck with the propriety and elegance of her manner, he a few days, after mentioned this circumſtance to Mr. Barry, who was his particular friend, in ſo warm a manner, that Mr. Barry, in conſequence of his requeſt, viſited the young lady, and from a few ſpecimens which he prevailed on her timidity to give, found his friend had not exagerated in his report of her abilities. The concluſion was, after ſome intreaty he prevailed on the mother to conſent to Miſs Oſborne's going on the ſtage, where ſhe remained many years, and though her talents were not of the firſt rate, yet ſhe ſuſtained many ſecond parts in tragedy and comedy with reputation, whilſt her character in private rendered her an ornament to her profeſſion. In proceſs of time we ſhall find this young lady married to Mr. W. Barry, treaſurer.

To give every public ſanction to the theatre, the Duke and Ducheſs of Dorſet commanded a play ſo early in the ſeaſon as Saturday October 13th 1759, when the comedy of the Stratagem was performed—in which Mr. Woodward played Scrub, Mr. Dexter Archer, and Mrs. Dancer Mrs. Sullen; with the ballad farce of the Contrivances, then in great eſtimation; Rove-

well

well Mr. Vernon, and Arethuſa, Mrs. Chambers. Every preparation was made to receive theſe illuſtrious gueſts, the houſe was uncommonly brilliant and crowded, and ſo highly pleaſed were their Graces with their entertainment, that every Saturday, and ſometimes oftner, during the remainder of the ſeaſon, did they honour the theatre with their preſence.

Much about this time, a young Gentleman was announced for the character of Lord Townly, being his firſt appearance on any ſtage. Curioſity prompted many to ſee this young adventurer, who on trial acquitted himſelf with great credit, and gave early promiſe of proving a powerful ſupport to the drama. His next appearance was in George Barnwell, when he confirmed the favourable hopes conceived of him.

The latter end of October Mr. Barry arrived with Mr. Moſſop, whoſe appearance was immediately advertiſed for Wedneſday the 31ſt, in his favourite character of Zanga, a part, in which he certainly outſtript every competitor and truly merited the admiration of the dramatic world. At an early hour the houſe was filled, and the reiterated plaudits which accompanied his entrance

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ſpoke the genuine feelings of the public at the return of one of the brighteſt ornaments of the Iriſh ſtage, and at the ſame time convinced the managers that they had procured a moſt valuable acquiſition to their community.

But ſhort are our views, and erroneous too often our beſt concerted projects, oft do we graſp with eagerneſs and avidity at objects which when attained, prove the ſource of endleſs evils! Even ſo was it in the preſent caſe. Could Mr. Barry and Mr. Woodward have foreſeen but a part of the conſequences which flowed from their engagement of Mr. Moſſop, or the numberleſs train of calamities which for a ſucceſſion of years they were to experience, they would have ſubmitted to the greateſt temporary loſs or diſſappointment, rather than invite over, a man who alone, in a very ſhort time, was capable of diſputing their title to the dramatic ſovereingty of this kingdom.

Mr. Moſſop's ſecond character was Richard, his third Macbeth, in which Mrs. Fitzhenry made her firſt appearance that ſeaſon. In a few days after, Meaſure for Meaſure, which was revived for the purpoſe, was brought forward and moſt capitally ſupported throughout, eſpecially by Mr.

Moſſop

Moſſop in the Duke, Mr. Woodward in Lucio, and Mrs Fitzhenry in Iſabella. The reputation this comedy then acquired, ſupported it for many years, and it was often repeated, even after ſeveral of its principal ſupporters were diſunited.

Mr. Barry judiciouſly reſerved himſelf till the ſeaſon was ſomewhat more advanced, and the novelty of Mr. Moſſop had, in ſome meaſure, ſubſided. On Saturday, November 17th he came out with the utmoſt force and eclat in Oreſtes, in the Diſtreſt Mother; Pyrrhus, Mr. Sowdon; Andromache, Mrs. Dancer; and Hermione, Mrs. Fitzhenry. The play was commanded by the Lord Lieutenant. The characters were new dreſſed. No expence was ſpared, and every circumſtance concurred to render the houſe uncommonly faſhionable and brilliant.

Early in December Mr. Foote was brought forward in the comedy of the Old Batchelor, which was got up on purpoſe for his Fondlewife, after which was preſented his farce of the Knights. Amidſt ſuch a group of capital objects, Mr. Foote had not much reaſon to boaſt of his attraction; however his engagement anſwered the manager's purpoſe,

purpoſe: he played upon ſhares and filled up the vacant nights. In the courſe of a few weeks, he appeared in Sir Paul Plyant, Double Dealer, Shylock, beſides often repeating his farces of the Knights, Taſte, the Author, and the Engliſhman returned from Paris. His Minor, from which great expectations were formed, failed very much, and was not repeated. Its ſucceſs afterwards in London gave it a currency, it otherwiſe never would have obtained.

Mr. Foote's benefit was on the 11th, of February, ſoon after which he returned to England, not much pleaſed with his expedition either as to fame or profit. The latter did not by any means anſwer; and he had the mortification to leave his pupil, Mr. Wilkinſon, at the other houſe in full poſſeſſion of the town, and riſing every day in the very line he ſo much excelled in, mimickry; even ſo much as to be acknowledged at leaſt equal, if not ſuperior, to his preceptor.

Much about this time, the comedy of the London Cuckolds was performed with ſuch ſtrength, as to render it popular enough to draw ſeveral houſes. Thank heaven! the taſte of the times has ſince undergone a material change. Were ſuch a

licentious

licentious piece to be now preſented to the public, they would reject it with the indignation it ſo highly merits.

The ſtage ſhould never be made the vehicle of immorality or vice; its intereſts ſhould ever be ſubſervient to the cauſe of religion and virtue. As long as this golden rule is obſerved, ſo long will the drama flouriſh, and be cheriſhed by the wiſe and good.

Here I cannot help obſerving, that a juſt and refined taſte in the public will ever have its due influence on the theatre. Was that taſte more univerſal, the manager and actor from inclination and intereſt would more ſtrictly conform to it—neither in ſuch a caſe, would introduce or perform what could not ſtand the teſt of truth and reaſon—ſuch as the audience are—ſuch always will be the actor.

A circumſtance happened about this time which deſerves notice. At this period the arms of Great Britain were uncommonly ſucceſsful by ſea and land in every quarter of the globe. Amongſt her victorious ſons, Admiral Saunders eminently diſtinguiſhed himſelf; by accident the

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ſhip he commanded put into Cork where he landed and immediately proceeded to Dublin—on his arrival in the evening he found that the Lord Lieutenant, to whom he intended to pay his reſpects, was at the play with the Ducheſs, upon which he haſtened to the theatre where he was introduced to them—the moment the audience were informed who he was, they ſtood up and gave him three huzzas! and the managers, when the play was concluded ſent on Mr. Vernon, dreſt in character, attended by every vocal performer in the houſe, to ſing Rule Brittania; ſo unexpected a compliment produced an effect not to be diſcribed. Every ſpectator joined in chorus, and the houſe reſounded with acclamations.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Smock-alley Company delineated—Mr. Brown, Ryder, Stayley, Hurſt, Heatton, Waker, Mrs. Ibbot, the two Miſs Philips's, and Mrs. Abington—They open—Mr. Wilkinſon arrives—his ſucceſs—High life below Stairs performed with great applauſe.

BUT all this while, the reader may perhaps imagine, that I have entirely forgot the Smock-alley theatre—not ſo—innumerable were the difficulties Mr. Brown, and the performers under his management, had to ſtruggle with—poverty, want of numbers, want of credit, a deſerted, ruinous theatre contraſted to every advantage which power, ſucceſs, ſtrength of forces, univerſal favour, and full coffers could confer.

However, all that could be done by people in ſuch circumſtances was performed. Mr. Brown's abilities I have formerly mentioned. He had an eaſe, a manner, and addreſs which few could ever attain. His Copper Captain was allowed to be ſuperior to Woodward's—his Benedict at leaſt equal

equal—Mr. Ryder, whoſe merit, even at this early period, was univerſally acknowledged, proved of infinite ſervice to the cauſe. As few ever deſerved public favour more, ſo have none enjoyed it longer than this excellent comedian. Mr. George Stayley, an actor of ſome ability and noticed as an author, joined the ſtandard, Mr. Hurſt, an actor of reſpectability and merit, Mr. Heatton, Mr. Waker, ſince well known to the Dublin audience, Mr. Johnſton, Mr. Adcock, Mr. Mahon formed the principal part of the male performers.

The ladies were, Mrs. Ibbot, who though far from being a good figure, was an excellent actreſs, and a remarkably good ſpeaker; ſhe played many characters in tragedy much above mediocrity, but in Mrs. Heidelberg, Lady Wrangle, Mrs. Oakly, and parts in that line, ſhe was ſuperior to any I have ever ſeen. The two Miſs Phillips's, Miſs Willis, Mrs. Adcock, Mrs. Johnſon, &c.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that three ſiſters ſhould have been equally ſmitten with a love for the drama, and have devoted their abilities to the ſervice of the theatre. The three Miſs Phillips's were of a genteel family in England, and had received a finiſhed and accompliſhed education.

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While young, they went upon the ſtage, and ſupported each of them a very principal and extended line of buſineſs, both in tragedy and comedy, for many years. The eldeſt died, unmarried, at York, where ſhe had reſided for ſome time, lamented, and beloved. Of the other two, one was married to Mr. Uſher: the other, became a Mrs. Frances, and, what has principally diſtinguiſhed her, was mother to the now ſo celebrated Mrs. Jordan.

From circumſtances the leaſt expected, frequently ariſe events the moſt ſplendid. The diſagreeable predicament in which Mr. Brown was placed, proved the means of introducing to the world, talents, which have ſince excited its conſtant admiration. I mean no leſs than thoſe of the famous Mrs. Abington. This lady was at that time very young. We are told by Mr. Wilkinſon in his Memoirs, that "She had played a few parts at Bath, when Mr. Brown was manager; alſo, at Richmond, and in a few chance plays, with Theophilus Cibber, in the Haymarket." And though ſhe had at every opportunity, given ſpecimens of thoſe comic powers, which were afterwards ſo amply diſplayed, yet it could ſcarcely have been ſuppoſed, that in ſo ſhort a time,

time, ſhe would have been acknowledged the firſt comic actreſs on the ſtage.

Mrs. Abington had been at Drury Lane with Mr. Garrick: but judging from every appearance, that at that time, ſhe could not have in London, ſo favourable a field for the diſplay of her abilities as Dublin preſented, ſhe liſtened to the propoſals of Mr. Brown, who was then in town on the recruiting ſervice. He entertained the higheſt opinion of her merit, and promiſed her every leading character ſhe could wiſh. His offers were accepted: accompanied by her huſband, ſhe embarked for Ireland, where ſhe arrived early in December.

Mr. Brown, having uſed every exertion poſſible in London, returned to Dublin the latter end of November. Having repaired, and decorated Smock Alley, as far as his ſlender finances would admit, and made every neceſſary preparation, he opened on Friday, the 11th of December, 1759, with the comedy of the Stratagem, in which he performed Archer; Mr. Waker, Scrub, and Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Sullen; being her firſt appearance on the Iriſh ſtage. On this occaſion, Mr. Brown ſpoke a prologue, written by himſelf,

entreating the favour and protection of the town.

Every effort which could be uſed, was tried, to procure a reſpectable audience for the firſt night, and the curioſity generally prevalent on ſuch occaſions, induced many to viſit their long-favoured ſcene of amuſement. The company was altogether tolerably liked, and hope animated their endeavours. Their next eſſay was on the Wedneſday following, when Mr. Brown appeared in his favourite Benedict, which with Mrs. Abington's Beatrice, were as truly capital pieces of acting, as ever were preſented to the public.

As Mr. Brown was acknowledged to be equal to any comedian living in ſuch characters—as Braſs in the Confederacy, Bayes in the Rehearſal, Ranger in the Suſpicious Huſband, Sir John Brute, Felix, Roebuck, Marplot, Dr. Wolf in the Non Juror, Don John in the Chances, Monſieur Le Medecin, Lord Chalkſtone, Aſpin, Abel Drugger; ſo did Mrs. Abington ſurpaſs the moſt ſanguine expectations in Corinna, Clarinda, Flora and Violante, Lady Fanciful, Leanthe, Maria in the Non Juror, Second Conſtantia, Fine Lady in Lethe, &c. Each night ſhe appeared,

peared, ſhe added to her reputation, and before the ſeaſon cloſed, notwithſtanding every diſadvantage, and many there were, particularly that of not having received the London ſtamp of faſhion and approbation, ſhe was conſidered as one of the firſt and moſt promiſing actreſſes on the ſtage.

To this embarraſſed ſtate of the Smock Alley company, fortune raiſed an unexpected relief. This was the arrival of Mr. Wilkinſon in Ireland, and his almoſt immediate engagement with Mr. Brown. This gentleman in his memoirs, which contain an infinite deal of dramatic information, and are well worthy the peruſal of every lover of the Theatre, relates the incidents of this campaign, with ſo much accuracy and fidelity, that he has left little for me to ſay.

I ſhall only therefore obſerve, that Mr. Wilkinſon was a very ſeaſonable and neceſſary reinforcement. He had great connections in Dublin, and general opinion gave him the preference to Mr. Foote. His terms were, ſhares above twenty pounds, and a clear benefit. The former proved of little emolument; the latter, highly productive. He appeared on Friday, January 4th,

1760, after the comedy of Much ado about Nothing, in a piece of Mr Foote's, never at that time acted in Ireland, called the Diverſions of the Morning. He was well ſupported, and received much applauſe. His imitation of his late friend Mr. Foote, was highly reliſhed, and he repeated it on the Monday following, after Browne's Shylock, and Mrs. Abington's Portia, to about forty pounds.

Mr. Wilkinſon during his ſtay, repeatedly acted King Lear, Zampti in the Orphan of China, Mrs. Amlet in the Confederacy, Lord Chalkſtone and Cadwallader: Mrs. Abington Becky. His benefit was fixed for Friday, February 15th, Douglas, and for the firſt time in this kingdom, the farce of High Life below Stairs, when, notwithſtanding a very deep ſnow ſtorm, Meaſure for Meaſure performed at Crow Street, with Moſſop, Woodward and Fitzhenry, with the pantomime of Fortunatus, which drew one hundred and twenty pounds, and a concert for the benefit of a Miſs M'Neale, yet, ſo great was his intereſt, there was an overflow from every part, and the amount of the receipts was one hundred and ſeventy-two pounds, the greateſt then ſaid to have been ever known in that Theatre. A ſecond night was demanded for his outſtanding tickets,

tickets, and on Thurſday, February 21ſt, to the Orphan of China and High Life, there was one hundred and fifty pounds. Mr. Wilkinſon returned to London early in March 1750, much ſatisfied with his expedition.

And here I muſt notice, the extraordinary ſucceſs of the farce of High Life below Stairs. It would exceed the limits preſcribed to this work, to copy at full length, the circumſtances attending this piece, which Mr. Wilkinſon ſo agreeably deſcribes: ſuffice it to ſay, that this pleaſing farce had eſcaped the notice of the Crow Street managers. In the multiplicity of their buſineſs, engroſſed as they were, in the preparation of grand tragedies and pantomimes, they probably might not have thought it worthy of their attention. Mr. Wilkinſon luckily fixed upon it. He communicated his intentions to Mrs. Abington, who not only approved of his choice, but conſented to play the part of Kitty. The piece had been brought out at Drury Lane, ſo early as the month of October, where it had met with the greateſt ſucceſs. They had both frequently ſeen it before they left London, and were therefore quite perfect in the ſtage buſineſs proper to it. It lay within the compaſs of the company; could be

got up at very little expence, and no comparison could be drawn to their disadvantage.

Mr. Wilkinson tells us——" Mr. Ryder's Sir " Harry was a very excellent piece of acting, and " helped the piece materially. A Mr. Gates, a very " conceited actor, played Lord Duke. His faults " and oddities served but to heighten the extra- " vagance of the character. Mr. Heatton's Philip, " was as well as such a part could be. He was " a very good actor in all the dry clowns, Clod- " poles, &c. Miss Philips (aunt to the present " Mrs. Jordan) our heroine, who was also of a " conceited turn, though sensible and well edu- " cated, made the part of Lady Bab better than " any other actress I ever saw attempt it; myself " from observation and youth must have been " stupid, not to have made a very good Jemmy, " the Country Boy, and, as the great personage " always appears last in triumphal entries and " processions; so in Mrs. Kitty, Mrs. Abington " advanced. The whole circle were in surprise " and rapture, each asking the other how such a " treasure could have possibly been in Dublin, " and almost in a state of obscurity; such a jewel " was invaluable, and their own tastes and judg- " ments they feared, would justly be called in " question, if this daughter of Thalia was not

" immediately

"immediately taken by the hand, and diſtin-
"guiſhed as her certain and ſtriking merit de-
"manded." To this I ſhall only add, that ſo ſucceſsful were they in their repreſentation of this farce, that it was repeated upwards of a dozen times, during the remaining part of the ſeaſon.

Little more remains to be ſaid of the Smock Alley company, for the preſent. Notwithſtanding the great merit of the ſeveral performers I have mentioned, yet the conteſt was too unequal to be maintained with any degree of probable ſucceſs. Mr. Brown varied the bill of fare as much as poſſible. He appeared alternately in Benedict, Richard, Captain Macheath, Copper Captain, Old Norval, Roman Father, &c. Though he diſplayed much merit in each, and was in ſeveral aided by the riſing favourite Mrs. Abington; though Mr. Ryder was allowed to be a promiſing and favourite actor, though Mr. Hurſt, Mr. Heatton, Mr. Stayley, Miſs Philips, Mrs. Ibbot, and ſeveral others, had diſtinguiſhed themſelves, yet ſtill all was ineffectual. The receipts in common were from 15 *l.* to 40 *l.* many had good benefits, particularly Mrs. Abington, who had got up the play of A New Way to Pay

Old

Old Debts, and who grew then ſo much the faſhion, that her houſe was crowded and brilliant.

Mr. Brown, at length, cloſed a diſagreeable campaign, early in May 1760, heartily tired of his ſituation; his finances certainly could not be much more deranged than they were at the commencement, for he had nothing to loſe at the beginning: it is true, there was an accumulation of debts, which perhaps, have never ſince been diſcharged, and the reſt of the performers muſt have ſuffered materially in their circumſtances.

I ſhall cloſe for the preſent, my account of the Smock Alley Theatre, with the following bill of one of their beſt and moſt attracting comedies, which may afford ſome inſight into the ſtate of their performances.

By Permiſſion of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, at the Theatre in SMOCK-ALLEY.

For the Benefit of Mr. SAMUEL JOHNSON,
On Friday the 7th of March, 1760, will be
preſented a Comedy, called,
The CHANCES.

Don

Don John, by Mr. BROWN,
Don Frederick, by Mr. Mahon,
Don Anthonio, by Mr. Johnſon.
Duke, by Mr. Adcock,
Petruchio, by Mr. Stayley,
Peter, by Mr. Mittier, Anthony, by Mr. Jones,
Firſt Conſtantia, by Miſs PHILLIPS,
Landlady, by Mrs. Adcock,
Mother, by Mrs. Johnſton,
Second Conſtantia, by Mrs. ABINGTON.
After the play, *Bucks have at ye all*, by
Mr. VERNEL, (being his firſt appearance)
To which will be added a Farce, called,
The SHEEP SHEARER,
Pan (with Songs in Character) by Mr. Mahon,
Autolicus (the Pedlar) by Mr. Vernel,
With entertainments of Dancing, as will be expreſſed in the Bills for the Day.

Tickets to be had at the Fruit-ſhop, oppoſite the Hoop-petticoat, in Smock-alley, and of Mr. Johnſon, at Mr. Nugents, Glaſs Ware Houſe, in Copper-alley.

Places in the Boxes to be taken of Mr. Cullen, Linnen-draper, Bride-ſtreet. Boxes and Lettices, 5*s.* 5*d.* Pit, 3*s.* 3*d.* Gallery, 2*s.* 2*d.* Upper Gallery, 1*s.* 1*d.*

Printed by Auguſtus Long, in Eſſex-ſtreet.

Let us now return to the victorious party. Hitherto each event had anſwered to their utmoſt wiſh; the theatre was in the higheſt requeſt, and well attended. Indeed, in juſtice to the managers, it muſt be obſerved, that they were truly deſerving of public favour. They ſpared neither pains nor expence, in preparing their pieces for repreſentation; on the contrary, their profuſion was their only fault. They launched into expences, which the receipts of a Dublin theatre have hitherto never been able to repay; expences which, in the end, muſt, even with the greateſt ſucceſs, involve every manager who adopts them, in inevitable ruin.

The tragedies of Crow-ſtreet, were got up in a ſtile of ſuperior ſplendour. The expence of the mere guards in Coriolanus, amounted to 3*l.* 10*s.* per night. The guards and chorus ſingers in Alexander, to 8*l.* The acting of the tragedies was firſt rate. The force of the Two Heroes of the Buſkin, was aided by the powerful attractions of Mrs. Dancer and Mrs. Fitzhenry. A ſpecimen or two will ſhew the ſtrength of their repreſentations, as Othello, Mr. Barry, Roderigo, Mr. Woodward, Caſſio, Mr. Dexter, Brabantio, Mr. Walker, Iago, Mr. Moſſop,

Moſſop, Deſdemona, Mrs. Dancer, and Emelia, Mrs. Fitzhenry. Venice Preſerved; Pierre, Mr. Moſſop, Jaffier, Mr. Barry, Belvidera, Mrs. Dancer. In Jane Shore, Haſtings, Barry, Dumont, Moſſop, Jane Shore, Dancer, Alicia, Fitzhenry. All for Love, Antony, Barry, Dolabella, Dexter, Ventidius, Moſſop, Octavia, Dancer, Cleopatra, Fitzhenry. Theſe with Mr. Woodward's excellent pantomimes, where neither pains or expence were ſpared, were deſerving of every favour and encouragement.

There never were, perhaps, two tragedians, of ſuch uncommon excellence, whoſe abilities ſo well accorded, and whoſe reſpective lines of acting, ſo little interfered, as thoſe of Barry and of Moſſop. Nature had, indeed been peculiarly bountiful to both, and had gifted them with a liberal hand. But in the diſtribution of her favours, ſhe would appear to have promoted union, by diverſity. The talents of each, though great, were ſo diſtinct, their qualifications ſo oppoſed, as to preclude the probability of diſputes ariſing from immediate competition. Their performances, formed an almoſt total contraſt, the one to the other; hence, it would be natural to imagine, that thoſe theatrical de-

mons,

mons, envy and diſcord, ſhould have been for ever excluded from their intercourſe. Happy would it have been for themſelves, happy for a numerous liſt of performers, who were afterwards attached to their fortunes, if ſuch had been the caſe. Truth obliges me to confeſs, it was the very reverſe. The real motives which originated the coolneſs between Mr. Barry and Mr. Moſſop, I am not able, at this diſtance of time, to aſcertain, but the effects were viſible.

The fame of Mrs. Abington ſtill increaſing, ſhe became an object for the Crow-ſtreet managers to fix their attention upon; many perſons of the firſt rank earneſtly intereſted themſelves in her favour, and wiſhed much to ſee their new favourite tranſplanted to the genial ſunſhine of the royal theatre before the cloſe of the preſent ſeaſon; and they exerted themſelves ſo ſtrenuouſly, that an engagement was ſoon concluded. She was to perform a few nights for a clear benefit.

The firſt appearance of Mrs. Abington at Crow-ſtreet theatre was on the 22d of May, 1760, in the character of lady Townly, and Lucinda

Lucinda in the Engliſhman in Paris, being the night appointed for her benefit; and, ſo generally was ſhe patronized, that part of the pit was laid into the boxes, and there was a great overflow from every part of the houſe. So rapidly did this charming actreſs riſe, and ſo highly was ſhe eſteemed by the public: even ſo early did ſhe diſcover a taſte in dreſs and a talent to lead the ton, that ſeveral of the ladies moſt faſhionable ornaments were diſtinguiſhed by her name, and the Abington cap was the prevailing rage of the day.

As the ſeaſon advanced, it began to be rumoured, that a new and more vigorous oppoſition was intended. This at firſt was diſregarded, as an idle report; but every day added to its certainty. The latter end of April put it paſt all doubt. On the managers requeſting Mr. Moſſop to renew his articles, he frankly replied, he deſigned to open Smock-alley theatre the enſuing winter. This unforeſeen ſtroke they were not of courſe prepared to encounter. They had now a new, and much more powerful, rival to contend with; their viſionary hopes of having overcome all obſtacles, were by this declaration at an end, and they had their work to begin anew. However

ever, remonſtrances were fruitleſs. Mr. Moſſop was offered terms even beyond their utmoſt ability to fulfil. Theſe he haughtily rejected. Nothing therefore but uncommon exertions could guard againſt ſo formidable an attack, and they now ſaw, in its fulleſt extent, their error in bringing over ſo great and dangerous a favourite.

Every ſtrength being thus required, a very eligible engagement was offered by them to Mrs. Abington, which ſhe thought it proper to accept; rightly judging that her abilities would receive greater ſupport, and have better opportunities of diſplay with Woodward, than with Moſſop. It was, indeed, no eaſy taſk to adjuſt the diſtribution of characters between her and Mrs. Dancer, who then was eminent as well in comedy as in tragedy. However, it was agreed, as nearly as poſſible, to divide them with impartiality.

On Monday, June the 9th, 1760, the Crow-ſtreet theatre cloſed one of the moſt brilliant and ſucceſsful ſeaſons ever known in Ireland, with the tragedy of Oroonoko. Oroonoko, Mr. Barry, Imoinda, Mrs. Dancer, and the Virgin Unmaſked of Mrs. Abington. Mr. Woodward, immediately afterwards,

afterwards, ſet off for London, to endeavour to repair his loſſes and provide for the next campaign. He was followed, in a few weeks, by Mr. Moſſop on ſimilar buſineſs.

Mr. Barry, in the mean time, led his conquering troops to Cork, where a new and beautiful theatre had been built in George's-ſtreet, on the model of Crow-ſtreet, capable of containing an hundred and fifty pounds.

It may here, not be amiſs to mention, that as this work is deſigned as an hiſtory of the Iriſh ſtage, I hope it will not be deemed, deviating from the general plan, to devote occaſionally a few pages to the dramatic occurrences of the ſecond city in the kingdom.

Cork has, from the earlieſt accounts, been uſed to have theatrical performances exhibited in a degree of perfection that has rendered the audience remarkably good judges. The reaſon is evident. The theatre was ſeldom opened but in ſummer, when the beſt of the Dublin company uſed to be ſelected, with the addition of ſome of the moſt capital performers from

London.

London. Before 1736, there never had been a regular theatre built.

In that year, they opened one tolerably commodious, where the preſent Buſh Tavern ſtands in George's-ſtreet.

As Barry and Woodward had formed the moſt extenſive deſigns, ſo opulent a city as Cork, could not eſcape their notice. They purchaſed a piece of ground in George's-ſtreet, and opened a ſubſcription of fifty pounds each, for building a new theatre. The ſubſcription ſoon filled, as the ſubſcribers were each entitled to transferable tickets of admittance to every performance without exception. The theatre opened with an occaſional prologue in July 1760. The company was, perhaps, the beſt ever then ſeen in the city: the natural conſequence was, that the ſucceſs was equal to the excellence of the performers, and there was a continuation of the fulleſt houſes ever known. What in ſome meaſure contributed to this was the war, which at that time brought numbers of his majeſty's ſhips of war to Cove. Sailors have always been remarked as fond of a theatre, and as they earn their money harder than any other deſcription of people in the world,

world, ſo do they ſpend it more freely. A miſerly ſeaman is a prodigy.

There happened, however, an event, at the opening of the Cork theatre at this time, worthy of noticeing. The mayor of Cork had always been accuſtomed, when the company came to town, to be waited on by the manager, for his permiſſion to perform. This, though a mere ceremony, as leave never was refuſed, Mr. Barry did not chuſe to comply with. The mayor, willing to preſerve the etiquette, declared he would not grant his licence. Mr. Barry informed him, he did not ſtand in need of his protection, as he could open his theatre without. The matter growing ſerious, friends interpoſed, and Mr. Barry, to put an end to it, produced the king's patent, granting to Mr. Wood, and his deputies, the office of maſter of the revels in the kingdom of Ireland, with liberty to open one or more theatres in Dublin, or any other place they ſhould chooſe. After this, he ſhewed the deputation granted to Mr. Woodward and himſelf, and to further ſatisfy the Mayor, he laid copies of both before the city council, who acknowledged their validity, and the Mayor forbore any further oppoſition.

Mr.

Mr. Woodward remained but a ſhort time in London, and having in the beſt manner poſſible, ſettled his affairs, then ſet off for Cork, where the company remained 'till the latter end of September, when each party prepared to take the field.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Remarks on Theatrical oppositions—Crow-street opens 24th October 1760—Woodward's Prologue—Death of King George the 2d and delay to the Theatres—Smock-alley opens—Weston's 1st appearance—Mr. Griffith's ditto—Enumeration and comparison of the two companies—The expence of them—Performance of Venice Preserved at both houses, and comparison—Hostile measures of each party, and their consequences—The pieces brought out by each—Indiscretion of Mr. Stayley—Smock-alley closes 6th June 1761—Crow-street 9th June—Mr. Shuter's 1st appearance.

WHETHER the interests of the dramatic world, and of the public in general, are best served by a single Theatre, or by a plurality, has been matter of frequent dispute. As on every speculative point, so on this, advocates are to be found for each side of the question. Nor are arguments, respectively, wanting.

By

By ſome it is ſaid, that the excluſive eſtabliſhment of a ſingle Theatre, under proper regulations, is ſufficient to ſecure the entertainment of the public; whilſt it precludes the diſtraction and diſtreſs, naturally incident to contending parties. Others, on the contrary, declaim againſt it, as againſt all monopolies; as partial and unjuſt, as fettering the will of the people, and depriving them of that freedom of choice, which is their natural right.

Without entering into the merits of this queſtion, a matter foreign to the purpoſe of this work, let it ſuffice, to ſtate facts, as they have been. Thus much has been extracted, by a contemplation of the oppoſition, upon the hiſtory of which we are now entering. It will exhibit to us, as in the caſe of all parties, many miſchiefs, and many exceſſes.

As the period for the commencement of operations approached, all was expectation. Various were the reports in circulation; and curioſity was eager for an examination, and compariſon of the two companies. Mr. Moſſop returned at the latter end of September. Smock-alley underwent a thorough repair, which, indeed, it

eſſentially

eſſentially wanted. An entirely new ſet of ſcenes were painted, by Edwards, and a tolerable new wardrobe was collected.

Crow-ſtreet Theatre was alſo new painted and decorated, and every thing being prepared, they took the lead, and opened on Friday October 24th 1760; with a new occaſional prologue, written and ſpoken by Mr. Woodward, who, with great ſpirit, affected to make light of the difficulties they had to encounter: Repeating thoſe lines of Hotſpur's,

Harry to Harry ſhall, and horſe to horſe,
Meet and n'eer part, 'till one drop down of courſe.

The firſt night, at Crow-ſtreet, produced no novelty; it was purpoſely choſen for its title, All's Well that End's Well, Captain Parolles Mr. Woodward, Helena Mrs. Dancer, with the Lying Valet. The houſe was far from being crowded; on this occaſion, no judgment could be formed.

Mr. Moſſop had now, to all appearance, a fair claim to ſucceſs. With much diligence, he had collected a very excellent company. He

was

was univerſally admired as an actor, and had a powerful intereſt amongſt perſons of rank. The Counteſs of Brandon, and many leading ladies, were much attached to his cauſe; he had, independant of his own great merit, every charm which novelty of management and performers could give. The comedy of the Old Batchelor was the play fixed on and advertiſed, when, behold! on the very morning announced for his opening, a ſolemn, and unforeſeen event put an entire ſtop to his career for the preſent, and overcaſt by its gloom, the immediate brightneſs of his proſpects.

On Wedneſday morning October 29th 1760, news arrived of the deceaſe of his majeſty King George the ſecond. This melancholy circumſtance, cauſed the theatre to be immediately ſhut: it was a ſevere ſtroke to both parties, but particularly unlucky to the new levies of Smock-alley, who could not be ſuppoſed to be overburthened with caſh, to ſuſtain this additional delay. In this ſituation, patience was their only remedy. Fortunately, the goodneſs and conſideration of government, diſplayed itſelf on this occaſion. It ſhortened, by much, the uſual time of mourning, aſſured, that the grief implanted in the heart

heart of every ſubject, needed not this outward diſplay of ſorrow.

As ſoon as the limited time expired, both parties commenced their operations, with redoubled vigour. Crow-ſtreet, which continued to be the royal theatre, opened with the Buſy Body, on Monday 17th November, Marplot, Woodward, Miranda, Dancer, and Intriguing Chambermaid, in neither of which any new Faces appeared. Smock-alley reſumed the Old Batchelor, when that genuine ſon of comic humour, Weſton made his firſt appearance in the character of Fondlewife; and was received with much, and deſerved applauſe. This actor whoſe naiveté, and peculiar ſtile of playing has not ſince been ſurpaſſed, remained in Dublin the whole of the ſeaſon; and though he had not then attained the eminence, which afterwards he ſo juſtly acquired, yet he was received with great pleaſure, in the Lying Valet, Cymon in Damon and Phillida, Old Man in Lethe, Daniel in the Conſcious Lovers, Clown in Meaſure for Meaſure, Old Woman in Rule a Wife, and parts in that ſtile. Beſides Weſton, the firſt night preſented Mr. Sowdon in Heartwell and Mr.

Sparks

Sparks in Noll Bluff, (both theſe gentlemen had changed ſides) and a Miſs Kennedy in Letitia.

The next night brought forward Mr. Griffith, a comedian of eminence in the dramatic world, who had been for ſome years a principal ſupport of the Bath theatre. This gentleman was a native of Dublin, ſon of Mr. Griffith mentioned with much reſpect in the former part of this work; he had received a liberal, and extended education, had, in the early part of his life, a genteel employment in the Cuſtom Houſe, and was brother to the celebrated Mrs. Griffith, an authoreſs of great repute, and whoſe ſhare in the letters of Henry and Frances, had raiſed her reputation high in the literary world.

This gentleman, poſſeſſed many abilities for the ſtage. His perſon was ſmall, but uncommonly elegant and well made. He was eaſy, ſprightly, and faſhionable; had a marking eye, a pleaſing countenance, and a good voice; he perfectly underſtood his author, and had great judgment. With theſe requiſites, he ſupported the higheſt characters in comedy with eclat. He had much of the gentleman in his manner, and

and was beloved, and eſteemed in private, for his many amiable and engaging qualities.

Ranger was the part he choſe to make his debut in: which he ſupported, with great applauſe, and, by deſire, repeated it a few nights after. The public afterwards ſaw him with great pleaſure in Sir Harry Wildair, Jack Stoeks, in the ballad farce of the Lottery, got up on purpoſe, Archer, Captain Brazen, Lord Chalkſtone, and the Fine Gentleman in Lethe, Mercutio, Lothario, the Man of Taſte, Younger Wouldbe, and a variety of other characters in the ſame line.

Two new Polly's made their appearance at the two Theatres, much about this time. At Crow-ſtreet, a Miſs Bridges, with the Macheath of Mr. Vernon, and the Lucy of Mrs. Abington, then eſteemed the beſt on the ſtage, and a Miſs Greene at Smock-alley, where Mr. Brown gained much applauſe in this, then popular hero. Peachum, Mr. Sparks; Lucy, Miſs Roſco. The opera was puſhed a few nights, and obliged to give way to other pieces of more conſequence.

Though the town was much divided in its opinion, concerning the merits of the reſpective companies, yet upon a critical examination, the ballance ſeemed inclined towards Mr. Moſſop; ſeveral of the moſt reſpectable of the Crow-ſtreet performers, had enliſted under his banners, as Mr. Sowdon, Mr. Heaphy, Mr. Sparks, Miſs Maſon, Mr. Corry, Miſs Roſco, Mr. Aldridge, Miſs Coralina; to theſe he added a variety of other engagements which threw great weight into his ſcale. Mr. Griffith, Miſs Kennedy, and Miſs Greene, I have already mentioned.

In point of real merit, and public eſtimation, Mr. Digges certainly ſtood next to Mr. Moſſop and Mr. Barry. With ſome difficulty he was prevailed upon to return from Edinburgh, where he was an extraordinary favourite, and join once more the fortunes of Smock Alley. His name and abilities on this occaſion, were a tower of ſtrength, and amply counterbalanced any advantages on the other ſide.

But, the new managers greateſt expectations reſted on Mrs. Bellamy, from Covent Garden; he had entertained hopes of Mrs. Fitzhenry, but they were diſappointed. Upon mature delibe-

ration,

ration, ſhe preferred the certain ſituation ſhe then held, to the unſtable proſpects which the views of the other houſe afforded. Mrs. Bellamy was then in the very zenith of her reputation, and without her aſſiſtance, Mr. Moſſop could not have played a ſingle tragedy with any probability of ſucceſs. Neceſſity, therefore, obliged him to yield to her terms, and he agreed to give her a thouſand guineas, beſides two benefits for the ſeaſon: A very capital ſum for a manager to riſque in thoſe days.

An Engliſh young gentleman of the name of Shaw, who had never yet appeared on any ſtage, was alſo engaged. He was remarkably tall and thin, but well made, and tolerably eaſy: from youth, figure, and manner, he ſupported a reſpectable line in tragedy and comedy.

The principal novelty of the Crow-ſtreet managers, was Mr. Fleetwood from Drury Lane, a very pleaſing and promiſing actor, but independant of him, they had undoubtedly great ſtrength in every line of the drama; not only in tragedy and comedy, but alſo in muſical pieces and pantomime.

The merits of Mr. Barry and Mr. Woodward, were at this time too well eſtabliſhed to need enlarging on. Mrs. Dancer at this period ſtood high in general eſtimation. Every day juſtly added to her fame. Nature certainly had been uncommonly bountiful, and gifted her with requiſites that fell to the lot of very few actreſſes. Happily for the drama, Mr. Barry, who was one of the beſt teachers in the world, had every inclination and opportunity, to bring thoſe ripening abilities to maturity: abilities I ſhall with pleaſure endeavour to deſcant on, at a future opportunity.

Mrs. Fitzhenry was alſo moſt deſervedly eſteemed the firſt actreſs in her line. Admired on the ſtage, beloved for her reſpectable character in private. Mrs. Abington's comic powers I have before noticed: they excited univerſal applauſe. She was already much the faſhion, and contributed highly to the ſucceſs of the pieces ſhe performed.

But that the reader may form a juſt idea of the two companies, I ſhall group them together, and leave his own judgment to form a concluſion concerning their merits; only juſt premiſing,

ing, that Mr. Brown had with a good grace, resigned the reins of government; and returned to the ranks, where he was of great service; that Mr. Ryder led a select, and well formed company into the interior parts of Ireland, where he continued several years with character, reputation and success, annually visiting the towns of Kilkenny, Wexford, Galway and several others; and that Mrs. Ibbot, the two Miss Philips's, with several of less note returned to England.

Crow-street Company, November 1760.	*Smock Alley Company, Ditto.*
Mr. Barry,	Mr. Mossop,
Mr. Woodward,	Mr. Brown,
Mr. Fleetwood,	Mr. Digges,
Mr. Dexter,	Mr. Shaw,
Mr. Jefferson,	Mr. Griffith,
Mr. Walker,	Mr. Heaphy,
Mr. Glover,	Mr. Sowdon,
Mr. Vernon,	Mr. Sadler,
Mr. Hamilton,	Mr. Sparks,
Mr. Mahon, senior and junior,	Mr. Dawson,
	Mr. Usher,
Mr. Knipe,	Mr. Kniveton,
Mr. Morris,	Mr. Heatton,

Mr.

Mr. Glenville,
Mr. Reed,
Mr. Adcock,
Mr. Hayes,
Mr. Mynitt,
Mr. Meſſink,
Mr. Haſtings,
Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Slingſby,
Mr. Stageldoir,
Mr. Rayner,
Mr. Carrol,
Mr. Carmichael,
Prompter.

Mr. Verneil,
Mr. Weſton,
Mr. Ellard,
Mr. Watſon,
Mr. Longfield,
Mr. Williams,
Mr. Somers,
Mr. Aldridge,
Mr. Booth,
Mr. M'George,
Maſter Lewis.

Ladies.

Mrs. Dancer,
Mrs. Fitzhenry,
Mrs. Abington,
Mrs. Jefferſon,
Miſs Oſborne,
Mrs. Bridges,
Mrs. Walker,
Mrs. Adcock,
Mrs. Mynitt,
Mrs. Packenham,

Ladies.

Mrs. Bellamy,
Miſs Kennedy,
Miſs Danvers,
Mrs. Uſher,
Miſs Greene,
Miſs Roſco,
Miſs Maſon,
Mrs. Dawſon,
Miſs Heatton,
Miſs E. Heatton,

Mrs.

Mrs. Knipe,	Miſs Willis,
Miſs Young,	Miſs Clarke,
Mrs. Maxwell.	Miſs Dillon,
	Signora Coralina, and Mother.

What a burthen muſt two ſuch numerous companies have been to the town! What a diviſion of intereſts muſt ſuch a number of performers have occaſioned! What a tax on amuſement, to ſupport upwards of ſixty actors and actreſſes, who with their unavoidable appendages of ſervants, dreſſers, hair-dreſſers, &c. when united with the bands, muſt have amounted, on the loweſt calculation, to upwards of two hundred perſons. The very weekly ſalaries of the performers only at Crow-ſtreet, often amounted to one hundred and fifty pounds; ſometimes more; beſides tradeſmens bills, and other inevitable diſburſements, without the leaſt allowance for themſelves, as actors, or managers. So enormous an expence, the receipts of a London theatre, at that time, could but barely ſuſtain; no wonder therefore, that our managers were obliged in a little time, to give way to ſuch a preſſure, and though poſſeſſed of the greateſt rectitude of principle, be unable to ſatisfy their creditors.

But

But to proceed, Mr. Woodward's prologue of "Harry to Harry ſhall, and Horſe to Horſe" was ſtrictly exemplified, on every opportunity during the ſeaſon. Intimation having been received, that Mr. Moſſop, Mr. Digges, and Mrs. Bellamy, were to make their firſt appearance in Pierre, Jaffier, and Belvidera, the Crow-ſtreet managers on the ſame evening, announced Mr. Barry in Pierre, Mr. Fleetwood in Jaffier, his entrè on the ſtage in this kingdom, and Mrs. Dancer in Belvidera: with the firſt time of the new Pantomime of Queen Mab; Harlequin, by Woodward; Columbine, Abington.

Curioſity and intereſt, operated powerfully on this occaſion, in favour of Smock Alley. There was a crowded and faſhionable houſe. Mr. Digges, on opening the play, was received with the warmeſt and moſt unfeigned plaudits. Mr. Moſſop's entrance was marked with three rounds of applauſe, as laſting as it was ſincere. Mrs. Bellamy alſo, in her turn, received the moſt flattering marks of approbation.

The two firſt, in the courſe of the play, ſupported their characters with a truth and energy, which juſtly entitled them to every praiſe. Mrs. Bellamy,

Bellamy, on the contrary, ſunk in the opinion of her auditors. Many years had elapſed ſince ſhe left Ireland. Time is ſeldom an improvement of a lady's charms. The roſes and lillies in her countenance had fled, and left a decay too evident. The ſweet tones of her voice had altered to a harſhneſs, which not being expected, produced the moſt unpleaſing ſenſations.

The attendance at Crow-ſtreet, the ſame evening, was not quite ſo crowded. But the applauſe was at leaſt equal, and in many points more deſerving. If I might hazard an opinion, on the reſpective merits of each performance, I ſhould give the preference, if any, to Smock Alley.

In the character of Pierre, Mr. Moſſop was moſt deſervedly ſuperior. It was, according to the beſt judges, as fine and characteriſtic a piece of acting as ever was exhibited. His voice, manner, and judgment, were undeſcribable.

Mr. Barry, poſſeſſed of every requiſite which the moſt luxuriant fancy could ſuggeſt, for the ſupport of Jaffier, wanted many of the eſſentials for Pierre. With a form faultleſs, and a voice

modulated to the moſt perfect harmony, he did not poſſeſs the roughneſs of manners, nor the auſterity of demeanour neceſſary for the latter character. That grace, and thoſe tones, which in the expreſſion of every ſofter paſſion, were of irreſiſtible faſcination, but ill depicted the ſternneſs of the ſoldier, meditating dark and dangerous conſpiracies.

Mr. Fleetwood pleaſed much in Jaffier: his figure was rather intereſting, his voice and manner, ſuch as are well calculated to gain an intereſt with the audience; but, in each of theſe, he could by no means ſtand in competition with Mr. Digges, who, next to Mr. Barry, claimed the precedence in ſuch characters over every other competitor.

Between the ladies, the advantage was evidently in favour of Mrs. Dancer. Her talents were then improving rapidly; Mrs. Bellamy's, as rapidly declining. The firſt, gave every night incontrovertible ſpecimens, that ſhe would one day be the firſt actreſs of the age: the latter, gradually ſunk into oblivion, wretchedneſs and poverty. Mrs. Dancer's Belvidera, I believe, was equal to that of Mrs. Cibber.

Venice

Venice Preſerved was repeated at each houſe, but with no great effect. The remainder of the ſeaſon, proved a continued diſagreeable ſcene of exertions and rivalſhip, productive of infinite trouble, great expence, and vexation, attended with loſs of reputation, and very little profit, and gradually involving the managers of each houſe in that ruin, which finally overtook both.

For the readers information, and amuſement, I ſhall ſelect a few inſtances of the above. It ſeemed to be laid down as a rule, by the reſpective managers, that, no ſooner was a piece announced to be in rehearſal or for exhibition by the one, than the other ſtrained every nerve, no matter with what propriety, to prepoſſeſs the public with an idea of its being preparing in a ſuperior ſtyle by him, or boldly advertizing the very piece, on the very ſame evening; ſometimes, without an idea of its being performed, but merely to divide or ſuſpend the general curioſity.

Thus, the little ballad farce of the Lottery, which, from the limited number of after-pieces, more than its intrinſic merit, was then much in

faſhion,

fashion, was no sooner exhibited at Smock-alley, than the week following presented it to the public at Crow-street; supported by the Jack Stocks of Mr. Griffith, and the admirable Chloe of Mrs. Abington.

The Wife's Resentment, revived at the theatre royal, with Mr. Woodward, Mrs. Dancer, and Mrs. Abington, immediately produced an advertisement, announcing the same play with Mr. Mossop, though he had not the least idea of exhibiting it. Mr. Colman's farce of Polly Honeycombe, then performing with eclat at Drury-lane, was, in like manner, advertised by both parties, but only produced at Crow-street; on which occasion, Mrs. Abington acquired infinite credit in the part of Polly.

The girlish characters, I sincerely think, she then played superior to any actress ever remembered, and from her naiveté, and genuine traits of nature, the girls of the present actresses are copied.

But the greatest piece of generalship, manifested through the whole of this doubtful contest was respecting the new tragedy, of The Orphan

of

of China, written by Arthur Murphy, Esq; and at that time exhibiting with uncommon reputation in London. The great fame and popularity of this piece, rendered it an object of peculiar attention to both houses in Dublin; but, to attain their object, they pursued quite different lines of conduct.

The play being printed, was consequently, in possession of both. Mr. Mossop observed a profound silence on the subject, and kept his designs as much a secret as possible. The managers of Crow-street, on the contrary, confident of their strength, but rather injudiciously I should think, for several weeks, made a great parade of their intentions of producing it with a pomp and magnificence, equal to that of Drury-lane; informing the public, of the extraordinary expence they were at, in having all the dresses made in London, from models imported from China, and an entire new set of scenes painted for the occasion, in the true Chinese stile, by the celebrated carver, then deservedly in the highest reputation.

When the expectations of the town were raised to the utmost pitch, and curiosity strained

ed to the highest point, without the least previous hint dropped, most unexpectedly, early on Monday morning January 5th, 1761, bills were posted up, announcing the representation of this much talked of tragedy, that very evening, at Smock-alley theatre. *The scenery, dresses, and decorations entirely new;* with this specious, and popular addition, *The characters will be all new dressed in the manufactures of this kingdom.*

The truth was, they had bespoke dresses, to be made in London, on the models of the Drury-lane habits, but had not the least expectation of their arriving in time. As they knew that every thing depended on their producing it before the other house, certain they had not an equal chance on equal terms, the dresses and scenery of Crow-street being so much superior, they used every exertion possible. The tragedy was rehearsed three times a day, and Mr. Tracey, then tailor to the theatre, working day and night on the dresses, they were completed in eight and forty hours.

The event proved that they acted right. The Orphan of China drew five tolerable houses to Smock-alley, before they were able to get it out

at

at Crow-ſtreet; and then, it did not anſwer the expence they had been at. The dreſſes and ſcenery, were truly characteriſtic, but the curioſity of the public had been in a great meaſure previouſly gratified.

The following is the manner of its being performed at both houſes:

	Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Zampti,	Mr. Barry	Mr. Moſſop
Etan,	Mr. Fleetwood	Mr. Digges
Timurkan,	Mr. Walker	Mr. Sowdôn
Hamet,	Mr. Jefferſon	Mr. Shaw
Octar,	Mr. Knipe	Mr. Uſher
Morat,	Mr. Morne	Mr. Heatton
Mirvan,	Mr. Reed	Mr. Kniveton
Mandane,	Mrs. Fitzhenry	Mrs. Bellamy.

The Tempeſt, revived at this time, diſplayed another ſcene of contention. In this caſe, both companies ſtarted fairly, and brought it out on the ſame night; with, if I can judge, pretty nearly equal ſucceſs. They continued playing it, till both loſt money by it.

In point of performance, Mr. Moſſop had the advantage, as may be ſeen by the following view:

Proſpero

	Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Prospero,	Mr. Fleetwood	Mr. Mossop
Stephano,	Mr. Woodward	Mr. Brown
Alonzo,	Mr. Adcock	Mr. Sowdon
Sebastian,	Mr. Knipe	Mr. Heaphy
Antonio,	Mr. Morris	Mr. Heatton
Gonzalez,	Mr. Mynitt	Mr. Digges
Trinculo,	Mr.	Mr. Griffith
Caliban,	Mr. Glover	Mr. Sparks
Ariel,	Mrs. Glover	Miss Young
Miranda,		Miss Macartney.

With respect to scenery, machinery, and decorations Crow-street certainly was superior. Carver was then one of the first scene painters in Europe; Mr. Messink the first machinist ever known in this kingdom, and Finny their carpenter had infinite merit.

The greatest advantage the Crow-street managers obtained over their rivals, was with their pantomimes, which they exhibited on the most extensive and finished scale, and in which the Harlequin of Mr. Woodward was decidedly the greatest on the stage.

This

This ſeaſon, Queen Mab, and the Sorcerer, were brought out at an enormous expence, and performed many nights, yet, notwithſtanding they were exhibited in a ſtyle of perfection worthy the firſt theatre in Europe, and were univerſally admired, they by no means repaid the enormous expences, attending their repreſentation, and it is my opinion that the manager, who ventures a large ſum of money on this ſpecies of entertainment in Dublin, runs a very great riſk of not being reimburſed.

In London, the caſe is totally different, and the ſums laid out on proper objects, are ſure to return with ten-fold intereſt.

Againſt the pantomimes, Mr. Moſſop judiciouſly revived Henry the 8th, and got up a repreſentation of the coronation, which, on account of his preſent majeſty's acceſſion to the throne, was well timed, and brought money. It made a great bill, excited curioſity, and, though the dreſſes were not very ſplendid, nor numerous, yet they anſwered the purpoſe, and the play drew ſeveral houſes.

I cannot,

I cannot, in this place, avoid noticing a circumſtance, which ought to ſerve as a leſſon to every performer in future.

The farce of High Life was then in great reputation, at both houſes. One night, Mr. Stayley, of Smock-alley theatre, in one of the characters, gave the toaſt of "*his majeſty king George the ſecond, God reſt his bones.*"

This very extraordinary toaſt, though it might be ſaid to expreſs nothing diſloyal, yet was certainly highly improper, and a liberty which ought not to be taken on any ſtage. Several of the audience highly reſented it, and Mr. Moſſop with great propriety publickly reprimanded him for it. Mr. Stayley, endeavoured to juſtify himſelf; words enſued, and in the concluſion, he was diſmiſſed the theatre.

He then appealed to the public, but with little ſucceſs; and, as he had before created himſelf many enemies, by his writing and mimickry, he was pitied by few, blamed by moſt, and never after regained his ſituation.

This

This occurrence leads me to remark, the very great impropriety of any performer taking ſuch liberties with an audience. They certainly ſhould introduce no joke, or matter, not ſtrictly conſonant to their author, and with which the manager was not acquainted. He is, in every caſe, reſponſible to the public, for what is ſaid and done on his ſtage. Audiences are as variable in their diſpoſitions as the individuals who compoſe them. It is dangerous to ſport with their paſſions, and the manager, who has ſo much at ſtake, ought to be made acquainted with every innovation, however trifling. He alone ought to judge of their propriety, as he alone muſt be anſwerable for the conſequences.

The occurrences of the remaining part of the ſeaſon, worth mentioning, are but few. Mr. Murphy's excellent comedy, The Way to Keep Him, in five acts, was firſt performed in this kingdom, at Crow-ſtreet in February, 1761, where Mrs. Abington added much to her reputation, by the eaſy, elegant, finiſhed portrait, of the woman of faſhion, which ſhe exhibited in the widow Belmour. Mrs. Bellamy played Cleone, with ſome applauſe, at Smock-alley.

Mr.

Mr. Colman's new comedy of the Jealous Wife, was then bringing crowded houſes at Drury-lane. It's extraordinary merit, as it certainly ranks amongſt the firſt comedies in the Engliſh language, and the ſucceſs attending its repreſentation, induced Mr. Moſſop to preſent it to the public, late in the month of May, ſupported in the following manner:

Oakly,	-	Mr. Brown
Captain Cutter,	-	Mr. Sparks
Lord Trinket,	-	Mr. Kniveton
Sir Harry Beagle,	-	Mr. Shaw
Charles,	-	Mr. Uſher
Tom,	-	Mr. Ellard
Major Oakly,	-	Mr. Dawſon
Lady Freelove,	-	Mrs. Kennedy
Harriet,	-	Miſs Uſher
Mrs. Oakly,	-	Mrs. Bellamy.

Mr. Moſſop towards the cloſe of the campaign, when the town was nearly tired, opened a ſubſcription for five revived plays, Don Sebaſtian, The Ambitious Step-Mother, Timon of Athens, Tamerlane, and Richard; theſe, though forced, and thinly attended, carried him through, and he finiſhed, with the laſt mentioned

mentioned play, June 6th, 1761, when he returned thanks to the public, for the great patronage, and ſupport he had experienced.

In the mean time, Mr. Woodward took another trip to London, from whence he returned, with Mr. Shuter.

This popular comedian, had never been in Ireland before; conſequently, was an object of importance. He played the Miſer and School Boy on the 3d of June, with much applauſe. His next appearance was, for his own benefit, the 8th of June following. Don Lewis, in Love makes a Man, Clodio, Mr. Woodward; Carlos, Mr. Dexter; Don Duart, Mr. Jefferſon; Governor, Mr. Walker; Sancho, Mr. Glover; with his Fribble, and Mr. Woodward's Flaſh.

Mr. Shuter remained but a ſhort time after in Dublin. The characters he played were, Lord Chalkſtone, and the Old Woman, in Lethe, Maſter Stephen twice, with Scapin.

Crow-ſtreet theatre cloſed on the 9th of June, with Every Man in his Humour.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Dramatic portraits of Meſſrs. Barry, Moſſop, Digges, and Woodward—Their reſpective merits—The ſeveral characters in which they excelled—Reſpectability of the Iriſh ſtage.

THE eminence of the Iriſh ſtage, at the period to which we are now arrived, and the very great ability, with which ſeveral of it's principal departments were filled, ſeem to point out this, as a proper place, to pauſe and take a ſlight review of ſome of its principal ſupporters.

Meſſrs. Barry, Moſſop, Digges, and Woodward, were then in the zenith of their courſe: an impartial, though imperfect, ſketch of their reſpective merits, may, therefore, be beſt attempted here.

The character of Mr. Barry, has been already touched upon, in the firſt volume of this work.

In

In addition to that, I hope the following remarks, which I have with little alteration, copied from a gentleman, who had every opportunity of forming a juſt judgment of his abilities, will not prove unacceptable.

There never was, perhaps, an actor, who, altogether was ſo much indebted to nature, as Barry. As far as figure will warrant the expreſſion, he was certainly, the finiſhed portrait of man. His perſon was noble, and commanding; his action graceful, and correct; his features regular, expreſſive, and rather handſome: his countenance, naturally open, placid, and benevolent, yet eaſily wrought to the indications of haughtineſs, and contempt: but in the ſofter expreſſions of the tender, and feeling emotions, he principally excelled.

His voice was finely calculated to aid his appearance. It had melody, depth, and ſtrength; there was a burſt of grief in it, which was peculiar to himſelf. In the laſt act of Eſſex, where the officers were preparing his departure, and where he pointed to his wife, lying on the ground, with

Oh look there!

His

His manner of expreſſion was ſo forcible and affecting, that the whole houſe always burſt into tears. He ſaw the effect, and often uſed the cauſe, ſometimes rather improperly. In expreſſing the blended paſſions of love, tenderneſs, and grief, Barry ſtood unrivalled.

With ſuch abilities, it would be difficult to point out which character was his maſter-piece. But it is generally given to his Othello. It was a performance, which could not be tranſcended. His addreſs to the ſenate, was ſuperior to that of any man who ever ſpoke it. His various tranſitions, in the jealous ſcenes of that character, were beautiful, beyond deſcription.

The vanquiſher of Aſia, never appeared to more advantage in repreſentation, than in the perſon of Barry: he looked, moved, and acted the hero and lover, in a manner that charmed every audience that ſaw him; he gave new life and vigour to a play, which had lain neglected, ſince the death of Delane.

His Marc Antony had innumerable beauties. Indeed, his very appearance, in this magnificent

cent Roman, who loſt the world for love, in the young conquering Macedonian hero, and in every other character in that line, was equal to what the moſt romantic imagination could paint.

The limits of this work, will not permit me to follow him through the various beauties of his numerous characters. Suffice it to ſay, that thoſe who were ſo happy as to ſee him in the above, or, in the courſe of years, in Varanes, Macbeth, Jaffier, Oſmyn, Oreſtes, Horatio, Haſtings, Romeo, Oroonoko, Caſtalio, Hotſpur, Lear, Lord Townly, Young Bevil, &c. univerſally concurred in the opinion, that, as they had never ſeen his equal, ſo would it be ages, perhaps, before another Barry would ariſe.

With very oppoſite powers, yet with ſuch dramatic abilities as fall to the lot of very few, Mr. Moſſop next claims our attention. Never was there a greater contraſt than between theſe heroes: never were two performers better calculated by nature to ſhine together, to reflect luſtre on each others performances, and ſupport the oppoſite characters in tragedy.

I may not, perhaps, be ſeconded, in my opinion: but, I cannot help conſidering Mr. Moſſop, not only as an original, but as a ſingular actor: nor do I recollect, in the long liſt of capital performers, who preceded him, or whom we have ſince ſeen, one to whom he could ſtrictly be compared.

Mr. Moſſop poſſeſſed an agreeable perſon; he was of the middle ſize, well made: his action, at this time much improved, and with great propriety ſuited to the ſituation of the ſcene: his countenance, uncommonly marking, and expreſſive, his eye, piercing, and big with what his mind contained.

But, what eminently diſtinguiſhed him from all his cotemporaries, was the excellence of his voice. It had a peculiarity of tone, equally diſtinguiſhing as Mr. Barry's; though in every reſpect, oppoſite: it was, perhaps, as fine, full toned, articulate, and ſolemnly impreſſive as any actor's that ever trod the ſtage: poſſeſſed of unuſual compaſs, it was admirably adapted, by its cadences, to diſplay the great, the grand, and the ſublime in tragedy; it conveyed, equally diſtinct, the loudeſt effuſions of rage, which the warmth

warmth of paſſion required, and the moſt ſolemn ſentiments of the deepeſt declamation.

There were, I believe, many inſtances where he more forcibly impreſt his auditors, by the energy, ſpirit, and fire, of his tones, than they ever experienced from any other performer. In the great and terrible, he roſe beyond idea. There were many paſſages of his Zanga, Coriolanus, Bajazet, Virginius and Richard, which aſtoniſhed, and were ſuperior to the boldeſt conception before formed of thoſe characters.

Mr. Moſſop had alſo received a claſſical education, in Trinity College. He poſſeſſed much judgment, and in general, did uncommon juſtice to his author.

To the parts above mentioned, I may add, his Duke in Meaſure for Meaſure, which was truly a capital piece of acting, his King John, Ventidius, Chamont, Zampti, Achmet in Barbaroſſa, Cato, Macbeth, Hotſpur, Oſman in Zara, Horatio, Shore, Wolſey, Iago, Proſpero, and many others.

Such were the tragic actors, Ireland then, with honeſt pride, could boaſt. I am afraid "we ne'er ſhall look upon their like again." Since their days, tragedy has rapidly declined in public eſtimation; nor is there, at preſent, any immediate proſpect of its re-eſtabliſhment.

I am well aware, that thoſe characters as above delineated, differ in ſeveral eſſentials from the accounts of Mr. Davies, and the multitude of Engliſh critics, who, as they do not allow them that extraordinary merit, which I have aſcribed, ſo neither do they ſpare charging them with glaring faults, which take much from their ſuperior excellence.

In reply, I can ſay; that thoſe criticiſms were formed in very unfavourable circumſtances; without the opportunities of beholding them, in their ſeveral capital characters, from whence a proper criterion could be formed. My portraits are drawn from a time, when they were in the meridian of life; when their powers had arrived at maturity, and the judgment had acquired its rightful ſovereignty over the paſſions. The decided ſenſe of this kingdom, for many years, warrants my aſſertions, and at preſent, thou-

ſands

ſands are living witneſſes of the truth of my obſervations.

It remains next to ſpeak of Mr. Digges. This gentleman then certainly ſtood next, in merit and reputation, to theſe juſtly admired performers. Few men ever gave their auditors ſo happy an idea of the eaſy, finiſhed gentleman, and man of faſhion, as Mr. Digges. The elegance of his figure and deportment, the eaſe, and propriety of his action, with the juſtneſs of his conceptions and delivery, moſt deſervedly gained him numerous admirers.

He had, it muſt be acknowledged, a few peculiarities, which made ſome, at firſt view, ſtile him a manneriſt. But, an intimate acquaintance with his mode removed thoſe impreſſions, and eſtabliſhed his abilities, on the firmeſt baſis.

During the courſe of the winter, Mr. Digges, entered into a connection, with Mrs. Bellamy, which continued for ſome years, and was productive of much unhappineſs. The fair apologiſt, in her life, gloſſes over this tranſaction, with the ſame happy facility with which ſhe has

done

done many others, that were not strictly reconcileable to the laws of virtue, or religion. She calls it a serious connection, which though not binding by the laws of the country, with persons of her persuasion, was, notwithstanding, valid to all moral intents and purposes.

For the following character of Mr. Woodward, I am obliged to a cotemporary of his, who seemed, with great judgment, and candour, to be well acquainted with his merits.

" If frequent peals of laughter be a test of " merit, Mr. Woodward most enjoys the favour " of the town, and maintains it through the " variety of comic characters, in which he ap- " pears. In his designing of character, he is " many times singular, but often incorrect; if " he has not ease, he has a manner that stands " in the place of it, and let him be never so " deficient, he never displeases, his performance " being happily calculated to catch the eye at " first sight, and supported by a vivacity, joined " to a genteel, well made figure, that never " fails to make a proper impression, and bias " his audience in his favour. In Sofia, he is " extremely happy; and Bobadil, by which he

" has

" has acquired a vast increase of reputation, is a " part of his own creation, and a proof of his " genius; he is admirably characteristic, and " entirely original."

" Nor has he less merit in Duretete; his be- " haviour, when shut up amongst the women, " is truly admirable. His Scrub is rather too " grotesque, but in Tom, and Lissardo, he " makes up sufficiently for the defect. He gave " Falstaff much too old an appearance, yet a " levity of deportment irreconcileable to fat " Jack. He is well in the Busy Body. The " character of Flash, in Miss in her Teens, and " the fine gentleman in Lethe, he illustrates " with so many different strokes of humour, " that it is hard to say, whether in the boasting " cowardice of the one, or the affected elegance " of the other, he most excells. In those of " Touchstone, Brass, Beau Mizen, Mercutio, " Trappolin, he is unrivalled."

" Upon the whole, I must say, his acting is " spirited and vivacious. He has judgment, " that enables him to dash, with unexpected " strokes of humour, things dull in themselves; " and he often throws over his performance an

" air

" air that inforces on the ſpectator, and gives
" to his performance the appearance of origi-
" nality."

At this period alſo, the merits of Mrs. Dancer and Mrs. Abington, were riſing highly in eſtimation, and they were conſidered, by the beſt judges, as the moſt promiſing actreſſes of the day; a promiſe, which, how well it has been performed, it is unneceſſary to ſay.

But the ſame reaſons which tempted me, in this place, to enter upon the character of the gentlemen I have juſt deſcribed, induce me to poſtpone the enquiry concerning theſe ladies, to a time when their fuller merits will yield them more adequate juſtice.

The review we have taken, ſlight as it is, may be ſufficient to give us ſome idea of the value of the performers of that period, and of the reſpectability, to which the Iriſh ſtage was then entitled.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Barry and Woodward build a Theatre in Cork.—List of the Company.—Great successes.—Return to Dublin.—Both Theatres open.—Mrs. Abington and Mrs. Fitzhenry enlist at Smock-alley.—Mrs. Baddely and Miss Elliot, at Crow-street.—Mr. Macklin, J. Barry, Stamper.—Burletta's at Smock-alley.—Midas at Crow-street.—Mrs. Pritchard engaged there.—Decline of Crow-street.—Disputes and separation of the Managers.—Mr. King at Smock-alley.—Close of the season.

IN a former chapter of this volume, * mention has been made of a new theatre, built and opened by Messrs. Barry and Woodward, at Cork. Upon subsequent consideration, I find that there has been an error in the date. It was not 'till the summer of the year 1761, the period at which, we now are, that the new theatre was opened. The confusion, created by a multiplicity of other avocations, was the cause of this mistake, and it was not discovered 'till too late to be rectified; a detail, somewhat more accurate, will, I hope, in some sort apologise for the error.

* Chapter the second, page 40.

During the infancy of the ſtage in Ireland, Cork was frequently viſited by itinerant companies of comedians, who ſometimes ſpent an entire winter there with much emolument. The theatres, on thoſe occaſions, were generally temporary ſtructures, haſtily erected for the immediate purpoſe.

In proceſs of time, the Dublin managers extended their views to a city, ſo capable of ſupplying the intervening time, between the cloſe and the opening of their winter ſeaſons.

The country companies were obliged to give place to his majeſty's ſervants, and a new theatre was erected at the corner of Princes-ſtreet in George's-ſtreet, where the Buſh Tavern at preſent ſtands, and opened in the year 1736. On this ſtage the Elrington's, Woffington, Sheridan, and the moſt capital performers of the age, displayed their powers.

Meſſrs. Barry and Woodward, with a judicious eye, beheld the many advantages likely to ariſe from a theatre, on a more extended ſcale in ſo capital a ſituation; the preſent one being much too ſmall for their proceſſions and pantomimes.

mimes. They had accordingly advertised a subscription, for raising a fund towards building a new theatre. The proposal was eagerly embraced; in a few weeks the money was raised. The ground was purchased in George's-street, not far from the former building, in a situation which every day improved, and the work began.

The model adopted, was that of Crow-street. The dimensions were nearly as large, except having but one gallery. It was finished, and ready for the reception of the company this summer, and the public expressed great pleasure at so great an improvement in their favourite amusement.

The inside was spacious, elegant, and convenient: it held 1500*l.* English, at 4*s.* the boxes 3*s.* the pit, and 2*s.* the gallery. The stage was remarkably roomy, being nearly as large as Covent-garden was, before the late alterations; capable of exhibiting to advantage, Mr. Barry's grand tragic processions, and Mr. Woodward's pantomimes, both of which were there presented in a style of perfection, which there was not a possibility of doing before.

This

The theatre was opened in July 1761. To all the charms of it's novelty, the ſtrength of the following company was added:

Mr. Barry,	Mr. Morris,
Mr. Woodward,	Mr. Mynitt,
Mr. Shuter,	Mr. Meſſink,
Mr. Sowdon,	Mr. Knipe,
Mr. Jefferſon,	Mr. Mahon,
Mr. Heaphy,	Mr. Bridges,
Mr. Vernon,	Mr. Carrol,
Mr. Auſtin,	Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Glover,	Mr. Flury,
Mr. Heatton,	Mr. Stageldoir,
Mr. Glenvil,	Mr. Raynor,
Mr. Hayes,	Mr. Aldridge,
Mr. Adcock,	Mr. Neil,
Mr. Ellard,	Mr. Carmichael,
Mr. Hamilton,	Prompter.
Mrs. Dancer,	Mrs. Knipe,
Mrs. Hamilton,	Mrs. Ellard,
Mrs. Jefferſon,	Mrs. Clark,
Miſs Oſborne,	Mrs. Roche,
Two Miſs Heattons,	Mrs. Packenham,

Mr.

Mrs. Adcock, Mrs. Stageldoir,
Mrs. Bridges, Mrs. Williams.
Mrs. Glover,

From the above list of performers, and indeed from many others which could be given of other times, it will plainly appear that the Cork audience have been accustomed to the best of acting. From this circumstance, in all probability, has arisen, in a great measure, that justness of judgment in theatrical affairs, for which they are so remarkable.

The same reason will, I think, warrant me in asserting, that none but a Dublin manager can have the least chance of succeeding with them. His situation during the winter in the capital, and the number of exotics, which he is obliged to import every summer, give him a superiority, in point of entertainment, over every other competitor in this kingdom.

With such recommendations, it is scarcely necessary to say, that the Cork season of 1761, proved uncommonly brilliant and profitable. The company returned to Dublin, flushed with success.

Mr.

Mr. Woodward loſt no time, but immediately ſailed for England, and the day following, Mr. Moſſop arrived with Mrs. Abington, whom he had gained over from the enemy.

The ſituation of the contending powers at this period, was nearly that of equality. If there was any ſuperiority, it lay on Mr. Moſſop's ſide. Beſides Mrs. Abington, who then ſtood ſo high in public eſtimation, Mrs. Fitzhenry had enliſted under his banners. Thoſe ladies ſeemed apprehenſive of the power, lately acquired by Mrs. Dancer, and choſe the proſpect of an undivided empire, at the other theatre. Mr. Ryder, who had been abſent the laſt winter, returned at this time to Smock-alley, where in future we ſhall find him take that lead which his merit ſo highly entitled him to.

To endeavour to balance theſe loſſes was Mr. Woodward's employment at preſent in London.

Smock-alley took the field at this juncture, and opened on the 12th of October, 1761, with the Spaniſh Friar, in which Mr. Baddely of Drury-lane, made his firſt appearance in Gomez.

This

This actor has certainly a great deal of merit in ſeveral characters. There are many of the Frenchmen, Jews, and parts of a dry cynical humour, which from him have peculiar manner, and originality. Through the remainder of the ſeaſon, we find him ſupporting a very reſpectable line of buſineſs; ſuch as, Touchſtone, Sir Francis Gripe, Frenchman in Lethe, Dr. Caius, Mr. Honeycombe, &c. The ſame night, Miſs Ambroſe made her entrè in Elvira; of her but little mention is afterwards made.

Amongſt the ill effects produced by two theatres, was that of ſeducing performers from their firſt engagements. Changing ſides was ſo much the faſhion, and ſome gentlemen were ſo much in this mode of manoevering, that they were ſometimes led into great miſtakes, and have often been called to begin a play at one theatre, when they have been found dreſſing at another.

The ſanction of the theatre royal, continued to be of great uſe to Crow-ſtreet, and Mr. Barry opened on the 24th of October, 1761, by command of the Earl of Halifax, with Romeo.

Soon

Soon after, Mr. Woodward returned with the celebrated Miſs Elliot, then in great reputation as a fine girl, and pleaſing actreſs. On the 11th of November following, ſhe came forward in her favourite character of Maria in the Citizen, which as it was purpoſely written by Mr. Murphy, to give ſcope to her abilities, ſo did ſhe excell in this elegant, ſprightly, playful girl, all her ſucceſſors. Mr. Woodward was the young Philpot, and the farce was ſeveral times repeated. Miſs Elliot afterwards played Mrs. Harlow, Jeſſica, Euphroſine, Miſs Notable, Cherry, Columbine, Polly Honeycombe, the School Boy, &c.

Much about this time, Mr. Thomas Barry, ſon to the manager, was firſt introduced to the public in Tamerlane; his father playing Bajazet. This young gentleman's figure was light and pleaſing, but his abilities were far from being of the firſt rate. He juſt attained mediocrity, and might be ſaid, never to offend.

His next trial was in the intereſting Norval Douglas, where his age, abilities, and figure, conſpired to render him a proper repreſentative for the Scottiſh youth. He continued ſeveral

years

years on the ſtage, and though he could not be conſidered as a valuable acquiſition, yet was he of conſiderable ſervice in ſupporting a firſt and ſecond line of characters in tragedy and comedy.

Buſineſs, notwithſtanding ſo much novelty, continuing but very indifferent, the managers, as their dernier reſort, produced the veteran Macklin, who at that time was acknowledged to be the firſt actor in his line, on the ſtage. He was then upwards of ſixty years of age. His Miſer, Shylock, Iago, drew money, and were often repeated.

In December, he brought out his Love A la mode, which met with uncommon ſucceſs, being performed upwards of ſixteen nights that ſeaſon. In this piece, Mr. Barry played Sir Callaghan, Mr. Woodward, Squire Groom; Mr. Meſſink, Beau Mordecai; and Mr. Macklin, Sir Archy M'Sarcaſm; a farce of ſuch merit, and ſo well ſupported, had not been ſeen for many years.

Amongſt the Crow-ſtreet imports of this year, Mr. Stamper requires to be remembered. He

was

was deſervedly eſteemed in ſuch characters as the Miſer, Scrub, &c. Some years after, he played at Edinburgh, and ſupported that line of buſineſs with much reputation.

Fortune, at this time, ſeemed to incline towards Mr. Moſſop. The town, though torn and divided by contending parties, which often produced diſagreeable conſequences, rather favoured his theatre, and he was remarkably happy in ſeveral of his engagements.

I have before mentioned Mr. Wilkinſon. His former popularity and ſucceſs, induced Mr. Moſſop to conſider him as a powerful auxiliary. He accordingly concluded a treaty with him for twelve nights, and a benefit, and he appeared in January, 1752, in Mr. Foote's comedy of the Minor, where he perſonified the characters of Mrs. Cole, Shift, Smirk, Tranſfer, and Dr. Squintum, and which, notwithſtanding its bad fortune two years before, pleaſed much and brought ſeveral houſes.

Mr. Wilkinſon's trip fully anſwered, both as to reputation and profit. He brought the manager money, and his own benefit was remarkably

markably great. He then acceeded to overtures from Mr. Woodward, who offered him Twenty guineas for four nights, and a clear benefit. He consequently appeared at Crow-street, in Kitely, in Every Man in his Humour, in which Woodward played Bobadil, to an excellent house.

In the June following, Mr. Wilkinson returned to England, highly pleased with the flattering reception he had met with in Dublin.

But what Mr. Mossop relied most on, and on which he had founded the most sanguine expectations, was a species of entertainment which had novelty to recommend it. He opened a subscription for an Italian Burletta, which fully answered his wishes. Most of the nobility and gentry were pleased with the idea, and the subscription filled so well as to enable him to carry his design into execution.

After much preparation, on the 19th of December, the comic opera of *La Cascina*, was performed. The principal characters by, Signior Antonio Minelli, the director of the Burletta, Signior Dominico de Amicis, Signior Giovan Battisti

Battiſti Zingoni, Signiora Maria Anna de Amicis, Signiora Anna Dunlap, and Signiora Anna Lucia de Amicis, the muſic by Galuppi, the dances by Signior Tioli, Signior Giuſeppe Genoviſi, Signiora Ricci, and Signiora Vincenze Lucchi. The boxes and pit were laid together, at five britiſh ſhillings; the galleries remained at their uſual prices.

The Burletta pleaſed much. The performers were approved of, eſpecially Anna Lucia de Amicis, who became a great favourite. It drew a great deal of money, and was continued during the ſeaſon. However, they quarrelled among themſelves, and Signior Minelli, the original director, was obliged to reſign to De Amicis, whoſe family compoſed the principal part of the entertainment. Minelli ſettled in Dublin, in the wine and ſpirit trade. He is ſtill living on the Bachelor's-walk, a gentleman of worth and character.

To oppoſe this rage of the public, the Burletta of Midas was firſt produced. It's author, Kane O'Hara, Eſq; was a gentleman of good connections, and well known in the faſhionable world. The piece was put into rehearſal, with great expectations, and announced, in ridicule

of

of the others. under the conduct of Signior Josephi Vernoni, (honest Jo. Vernon.) The principal characters by himself, Signior Patrico Mahoni, Signior Lewiso Olivero, Signiora Fredrisunda Bridgesa, Signiora Elizabetta Gloverina, and Signiora Maria Juvanelli; with dancing by the afterwards celebrated Slingsby.

Midas was brought out in January, 1762, and for some time, was strongly supported. The Earl of Halifax, honoured the 4th night with his presence, and it continued to be occasionally acted during the season.

That the Burletta of Midas, possesses an extraordinary degree of merit, is universally allowed. It is, in my opinion, superior to every one of the numerous productions of that species, which have since followed it. In its original state, of three acts, it certainly was too long, and palled upon the audience; but reduced as at present to an after piece, its success has been remarkable, and it ever will hold a distinguished place amongst the entertainments of the stage.

Fortune

Fortune ſtill continued to follow the banner of Mr. Moſſop; his houſes were, in general, better attended, and more faſhionable, than thoſe of Crow-ſtreet. The Counteſs of Brandon continued his ſteady patroneſs. The pieces in which himſelf and Mrs. Fitzhenry appeared, generally drew crowded audiences. Theſe were conſiderably ſtrengthened, by the acceſſion of another actor, who had then been but a ſhort time on the ſtage, yet had diſplayed great abilities, and who, a few years after, ſupported the principal characters of the drama with great reſpectability.

This was no other than Mr. Reddiſh, who made his firſt entrè on the Iriſh ſtage, in Etan, in the Orphan of China, and made a moſt favourable impreſſion on the audience, by his figure, voice, manner, and other requiſites. This gentleman remained ſeveral years in Ireland, and then returned to London, where he was much eſteemed, and admired.

The comedy of All in the Wrong, written by Mr. Murphy, was then performing with ſuch eclat in London, as to make it well worthy the attention of the Dublin managers. Each party prepared

prepared for its repreſentation. It was announced with much pomp, as in rehearſal at Crow-ſtreet; when, after five or ſix days hard ſtudy, it was moſt unexpectedly one morning, without any previous notice, advertiſed for that evening at Smock-alley. The conſequence was, it was puſhed on ſix nights, before they could poſſibly bring it forward at Crow-ſtreet, and then it was not worth much to either parties. Notwithſtanding which, it was played ſixteen nights that ſeaſon, at Smock-alley.

But the greateſt treat, the Crow-ſtreet managers preſented to the public, was the engagement of Mrs. Pritchard. That firſt of Engliſh actreſſes, appeared in Lady Macbeth, June 14th, 1762. Though in the decline of life, yet ſuch was the ſuperior force of her powers, that ſhe charmed the critical part of her auditors, to the higheſt degree But her figure operated much in her disfavour with many. Youth and beauty, on the ſtage, make impreſſions, which merit, unaſſiſted by theſe powerful auxillaries, can ſeldom attain.

The firſt appearance of Mrs. Pritchard, drew a very crowded houſe. Mrs. Oakly was her next,

next, which ſhe repeated twice. Whether from neceſſity, or whatever other motive I know not, but we find this lady placed in ſeveral ſituations, in which, notwithſtanding her uncommon merit, ſhe muſt appear, from her figure, to little advantage. As Mrs. Sullen, Lady Betty Modiſh, Clarinda, and Jane Shore. However, ſhe made ample amends in Zara, and Merope, with the latter of which ſhe cloſed the theatre, July 19th, when ſhe returned to England, leaving as favourable an impreſſion on the Iriſh audience, as her long tried abilities had unalterably fixed for the Engliſh.

But notwithſtanding any little temporary ſucceſs, during the courſe of the ſeaſon, the intereſts of the Crow-ſtreet theatre were viſibly on the decline. The Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Halifax, it is true, afforded his patronage, and generally commanded at leaſt once a week. Several very excellent pantomimes alſo, particularly two new ones, the Fair, and the Sorcerer, were produced. Yet, in ſpite of all theſe advantages and exertions, the managers found their receipts infinitely inferior to their diſburſements, which indeed were too heavy for a Dublin theatre to ſupport

Mr.

Mr. Woodward, who was a plain honeſt man, and who had ſunk a capital of ſome thouſands, the produce of many years oeconomy in London, began to grow uneaſy, and inclined to withdraw himſelf from the partnerſhip, which ſeemed to threaten final ruin.

Mr. Barry had leſs at ſtake: his property was inconſiderable, and his fame ſuffered no diminution, from this reverſe of fortune. He was therefore determined to perſevere.

The difficulties they were involved in, naturally occaſioned miſunderſtandings, which ſucceſs would moſt probably have prevented. Barry thought Woodward's expences for pantomimes, too great, he, in return, exclaimed againſt Barry's tragedy proceſſions. Each day added to their differences, and towards the cloſe of the ſeaſon, it ſeemed to be the mutual wiſh of both, to ſeparate.

An arbitration appears to have been entered into between the parties, but afterwards not abided by. This produced a paper war. Each, as is cuſtomary in ſuch caſes, laid the blame of

the rupture upon the other, and both, in all probability, were conducive towards it.

Mr. Woodward commenced hostilities by the following advertisement, which appeared in Falkner's Journal.

"From the late behaviour and conduct of "Mr. Barry to me, relative to the theatre royal, "I am advised, for my own safety, to let the "public know, that the partnership between "Mr. Barry and me is dissolved, and also to "caution all persons from giving further credit "to the said Barry, on the partnership ac-"count."

"HENRY WOODWARD."

Monday, July 12th, 1762.

This produced a recriminating advertisement from Mr. Barry, which was followed by a second and third, of the same nature. It would yield but little entertainment to follow the whole of this controversy, through all it's stages. Much less to copy all which appeared in the newspapers concerning it. Suffice it to say, it terminated in a total and final seperation.

Thus

Thus ended a partnerſhip, which promiſed ſo much ſucceſs at the beginning, and from which, though the public occaſionally reaped ſuch extraordinary entertainment, yet altogether, the evils ariſing, more than overbalanced the advantages. The managers loſt many thouſand pounds, and involved themſelves in a ſuit in Chancery; many debts were contracted, not ſince diſcharged, and many obſtinate parties, and attachments formed, which the following years rather inflamed, than appeaſed.

The victorious party, to all appearance, finiſhed their career with eclat, and yet, if the truth were known, Mr. Moſſop had no great reaſon to boaſt of the ſtate of his finances. It was a victory for which the conquerors had reaſon to weep.

Mr. King, who on quitting Dublin, had returned to a high ſtation at Drury-lane, was at this time a moſt deſerving favourite with the town. Him Mr. Moſſop engaged for a few nights, to conclude his campaign with.

He appeared in Ranger, and Cadwallader, and was received with that warmth of applauſe,

which his former character, and present improved ſtate merited; during his ſhort ſtay, he played the Copper Captain, Sharp, Oakly, Lord George Brilliant, Benedick, Lovemore, Scrub, Fribble, and Bayes.

In theſe he was capitally ſupported by Mrs. Abington, then eſteemed one of the firſt comic actreſſes ever beheld in this kingdom.

Mr. Barry led his troops to Cork and Limerick, where they ſpent part of the intervening time, 'till the opening of the Crow-ſtreet theatre. The following is the bill of their laſt night at Cork.

Being poſitively the laſt Night of performing this Seaſon. By particular Deſire,

For the Benefit of Mrs. KENNEDY.

By Permiſſion of the Right Worſhipful BOYLE TRAVERS, Eſq; Mayor of CORK.

On WEDNESDAY next, the 3d of October, 1762,

Will be preſented a COMEDY,

(not acted this Seaſon) call'd,

The CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

(Written by Sir RICHARD STEELE.)

Young

Young Bevil	-	Mr. Heatton,
Mr. Sealand	-	Mr. Heaphy,
Myrtle	-	Mr. Knipe,
Daniel	-	Mafter Kennedy,
Humphry	-	Mr. Glenvil,
Cimberton	-	Mr. Glover,
And Tom by	-	Mr. Auftin.
Phillis	-	Mrs. Kennedy,
Lucinda	-	Mrs. Glover,
Mrs. Sealand	-	Mifs E. Heaton,
And Indiana by	-	Mifs Heaton.

With Dancing and other Entertainments.

After the Play Mr. Auftin will fpeak the celebrated Epilogue, call'd

BUCKS HAVE AT YE ALL.

To which will be added, a Dramatic Novel, (not acted this Seafon) call'd

POLLY HONEYCOMBE.

Mr. Honeycombe	-	Mr. Glover,
Ledger	-	Mr. Knipe,
Scribble	-	Mr. Auftin,

Polly

Polly Honeycombe Mrs. Knipe,
Mrs. Honeycombe Mrs. Kennedy,
And the Nurſe by Miſs E. Heatton.

Boxes, 4*s.* 4*d.* Pit, 3*s.* 3*d.* Gallery, 2*s.* 2*d.* Tickets to be had of Mrs. Kennedy, at Mr. Dynan's in George's-ſtreet; at the Coffee-houſes, and places in the Boxes to be taken of Mr. Burn, at the Theatre. Tickets delivered for the 2d will be taken.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Mr. Woodward returns to London.—Theatres decline.—Mrs. Abington engaged at Drury-lane.—Mrs. Burden, Mr. Foote, Mr. Atkins.—List of both companies.—King Arthur brought out at Crow-street.—Its success.—Music gets forward.—Oratorio's.—Latter season at Crow-street.—Mr. Shuter, Mr. Dyer, Mrs. Clive, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Luke Sparks, Mrs. Lessingham.—Love in a Village.—Mrs. Abington, Mr. Woodward, at Smock-alley.—Season closes at both houses.

THE difficulties Mr. Barry had to struggle with, did not deter him from continuing the competition. He still had a very powerful party remaining in Dublin. His abilities as an actor were universally admired, and he hoped by his assiduity, to supply the loss of his colleague. It was a loss however, of too great consequence to be easily supplied. Mr. Woodward was, with great justice, a favourite with the town, whilst

whilst his attention, induſtry, and punctuality, added great weight to his management.

That Mr. Woodward had great reaſon to be heartily tired of the ſcheme he was embarked in, every one muſt allow. As a private man, his character was unexceptionable; as a performer, he moſt deſervedly ſtood foremoſt in his profeſſion; and as a manager, the public were under many obligations to him. Poſſeſſed of a capital, which, with prudence, would have rendered him independant for life, his evil genius laid the ſnare of ambition in his way, and, in an unlucky hour, he conſented to lead an oppoſition.

After four years conſtant anxiety, fatigue, and trouble, he returned to his native country, with the loſs of the greateſt part of his fortune, obliged to begin the world again. This, it muſt be confeſſed, was enough to ſour his temper; yet it were to be wiſhed, he had not, on his appearance at Covent-garden, when he ſpoke the following prologue, in the character of a returned prodigal, put on that humiliating ſubmiſſion which a Britiſh audience were too generous to expect,

and

and which the treatment he had experienced in Ireland never could justify.

Prologue written and spoke by Mr. WOODWARD *on his first appearance at Covent-garden Theatre, in the character of* Marplot, *after having been manager in* Dublin, *four years.*

Behold the Prodigal—*return'd*—quite *tame*
And (tho' you'll hardly think it) full of *shame!*
Asham'd! so long t'have left my Patrons here—
On random schemes—the Lord knows *what* and *where!*
—With *piteous* Face (long Stranger to a *Grin*)
Receive the *Penitent*—and, let him in!
Forgive his *Errors*—ope the *friendly* Door;
And, then, he's *your's* 1——and *your's* 2——and *your's* 3—as heretofore——
—Ye Gods! what Havock does *Ambition* make—
Ambition! drove me to the Grand Mistake!
Ambition! made me *mad* enough to roam—
But, now, I feel (with Joy) that *Home is Home*—
—Faith! they put *Powder in my Drink*, d'ye see?
Or else, by *Pharaoh's Foot*, it could no be!

1. 2. 3. Pit, Boxes, and Galleries.

Belike Queen *Mab* toucht me (at *Full o' th' Moon*)
With a *Field-Marshal Manager's* Battoon—
And, so, I dreamt of *Riches—Honor—Pow'r*—
'Twas but a *Dream* tho'—and, that *Dream* is o'er.
—How happy, now, I walk my native Ground;
Above—below—nay! faith—all *round and round*,
I guess some pleasures in your Bosoms burn,
To see the *Prodigal* poor *Son return*—
—Perhaps! I'm vain, tho', and the Case mistake—
No—no—yes—yes—for old Acquaintance Sake
Some gen'rous, hospitable, Smiles you'll send—
Besides! I *own* my Faults, and mean to *mend*—
—Oh, ho! they ring*—how *sweet* that Sound appears
After an Absence of four *tiresome* Years—
Marplot, To-night—so says the *Bill of Fare*, †
Now waits your Pleasure, with his *usual* Air—
Oh! may I *act* the Part, still, *o'er and o'er*!
But never BE the BUSY Body more.

The

* The Warning-bell rings.
† Pointing to a Play Bill.

The ſucceeding ſeaſon in Dublin, exhibited nothing very remarkable. The theatres were viſibly on the decline; unable to ſupport the expence of ſo continued an oppoſition, the managers found every day added to the precarioufneſs, and danger of their ſituation, without the leaſt proſpect of relief. The receipts of the two theatres were ſcarcely ſufficient to defray the expenditure of one. The greateſt contention ſeemed to be, not who ſhould gain moſt, but who ſhould loſe the leaſt.

The comic muſe was alſo at this time deprived of her greateſt ſupporters. Mr. Woodward I have juſt mentioned: Mrs. Abington was engaged at Drury-lane, and Mr. Browne, I believe, returned to Bath. The two laſt were ſevere loſſes to Mr. Moſſop, and theſe were encreaſed by the deſertion of Mr. Reddiſh and Mr. Sowdon, who had gone over to the adverſe party.

In ſome meaſure to counterballance theſe, he gained over Mr. Dexter, and imported Mrs. Burden, who was obliged to ſupport Mrs. Abington's line of buſineſs, with very little advantage to herſelf; a Miſs Parſons, from the Hay-market;

Hay-market; a Miſs Skyddart, from the Cheſter company, who had a fine voice, and opened in Nell; and a Miſs Stratford, whoſe firſt appearance was in Cordelia. To theſe were added, Mr. Foote who opened in the Minor. His novelty was now pretty much over, and out of his own eccentric pieces, little merit could be aſcribed to him.

The early part of this ſeaſon, introduced to the public a very reſpectable character: a Mr. Atkins made his entrè at Smock-alley, in Sir John Loverule. Being a painter, machiniſt, and harlequin, he that winter brought out a pantomime entertainment, called Harlequin's Funeral, which was liked, and brought ſome money.

Some years after, Mr. Atkins commenced country manager, and eſtabliſhed his circuit in the north of Ireland. His winter reſidence is chiefly at Belfaſt, where he has lately erected a beautiful elegant theatre, and ſome years ago, another at Londonderry. Theſe with Armagh, and Liſburn, form a regular circuit for the year, and every encomium is due to Mr. Atkins, for his conduct, character, and management.

Although

Although Mr. Barry's resources were nearly exhausted, yet altogether his company seemed superior to Mr. Mossop's. His tragedies were more uniformly supported, as will be seen by the following view of both companies.

Crow-street, November, 1762.	*Smock-Alley, Ditto.*
Mr. Barry,	Mr. Mossop,
Mr. T. Barry,	Mr. Dexter,
Mr. Macklin,	Mr. Ryder,
Mr. Sowdon,	Mr. Aickin,
Mr. Heaphy,	Mr. Jefferson,
Mr. Reddish,	Mr. Bridges,
Mr. Sparks,	Mr. Waker,
Mr. Austin,	Mr. Kniveton,
Mr. Hamilton,	Mr. Reed,
Mr. Ellard,	Mr. Atkins,
Mr. Glenvil,	Mr. Verneil,
Mr. Glover,	Mr. Baddely,
Mr. Morris,	
Mr. Adcock,	
Mr. Mahon,	
Mr. Messink,	
Mr. Corry,	
Mr. Lee,	

Mr.

Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Carroll,
Mr. Hartry,
Mr. Wilder.

Slingsby & Signiora Ricci, Dancers.

Signiora Pietrot and Madam Gourville, Dancers.

Mrs. Dancer,
Mrs. Barry,
Mrs. Kelf,
Miss Mason,
Mrs. Adcock,
Miss Adcock,
Mrs. Glover,
Mrs. Packenhem,
Miss Heatton,
Miss Willis,
Miss Ambrose,
Miss M'Neill,
Miss Passerini,
Miss Roche,
Mrs. Maxwell.

Mrs. Fitzhenry,
Mrs. Burden,
Mrs. Johnson,
Miss Skyddart,
Mrs. Jefferson,
Miss Stratford,
Miss Parsons.

I have not been able to obtain a complete list of Mr. Mossop's company this season, but the above were the principals.

But the greatest support Mr. Barry received this season, was from the dramatic masque of King Arthur, which was performed, for the first time in Ireland, under his auspices. This piece

was

was got up with great care and attention; the paintings were executed, in the first style, by Carver; the machinery, by Messink, and Finny.

The music of king Arthur alone, immortalized the great Purcell; it proved him the first composer of the age. No expence was spared in cloaths and decorations. The dances to this piece also, added much to its beauty, and were executed in the best stile.

It was brought out February 7th, 1763, in a manner that would have done honour to any stage. The effect it produced was equal to the pains bestowed upon it. The pulic was charmed with its representation.

Music, at this time, began to make some progress in this kingdom. It had always been cultivated, but in an inferior degree. Hitherto, it had been considered as an auxiliary to the theatre, but we shall soon find it beginning to take the lead, and constituting a principal feature in it's amusements.

During

During the passion week, in April, 1763, oratorios were performed at Crow-street theatre, under the direction of Signior Passerini, who had visited Dublin the preceding year.

The ensuing after season, 1763, was memorable for the number of London performers engaged by Mr. Barry. Mr. Shuter, Mr. Dyer, Mrs. Clive, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Luke Sparks, Mrs. Lessingham, and the celebrated Nancy Dawson. Such a number of capital performers, was a great accession of strength, and kept the theatre open till August.

At this very advanced period, was the comic opera of Love in a Village, first brought out in this kingdom. It had been performed at Covent-garden, for a number of nights, the preceding winter, with that great success and applause, it so highly merited.

In the infancy, as I may stile it, of the English vocal drama, the appearance of this beautiful opera attracted the attention, not only of the musical cognoscenti, but also of all ranks and degrees. It made an impression, unknown since the days of Gay, and the Beggar's Opera, which

till then had ſtood unrivalled, but was now obliged to behold a very formidable competitor.

Indeed, I muſt confeſs it my opinion, that, though many excellent operas have ſince been preſented to the public, yet none have been more intitled to their approbation, than Love in a Village.

This opera was capitally ſupported, Young Meadows, Mr. Mahon; Juſtice Woodcock, Mr. Shuter; Hawthorn, Mr. Wilder; Euſtace, Mr. Dyer. (How few of our muſical gentlemen, of equal ability, would now play ſuch a character,) Hodge, Mr. Glover; Sir William Meadows, Mr. Morris; Cook, Mr. Meſſink; Mrs. Deborah Woodcock, Miſs Maſon; Lucinda, Mrs. Mahon; Madge, Miſs Willis; and Roſetta, Mrs. Leſſingham; a double hornpipe by Mr. Slingſby, and Nancy Dawſon.

In oppoſition to ſuch ſtrength, Mr. Moſſop produced Mrs. Abington, whoſe popularity rendered her at this time a welcome viſitor; but who not being ſo well ſupported as ſhe ought, had not, conſequently, ſo much attraction. Smock-alley cloſed much ſooner than Crow-

ſtreet,

ſtreet, which kept open till the beginning of Auguſt, when they finiſhed with the Stratagem, Archer, Mr. O'Brien; Aimwell, Mr. Dyer; Sullen, Mr. Luke Sparks; Scrub, Mr. Shuter; Mrs. Sullen, Mrs. Leſſingham; with the Guardian; Young Clackit, Mr. Reddiſh; Harriet, Mrs. Dancer.

Mr. Barry, after a profitable excurſion to Cork and Limerick, returned to Dublin, fraught with the hopes of a ſucceſsful campaign, the enſuing winter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Lord Lieutenant patronizes Crow-ſtreet.—Arrival of Mr. Sheridan.—Mrs. Fitzhenry goes over to Mr. Barry's ſtandard.—Mr. Wilkinſon.—Burletta at Crow-ſtreet.—Mr. Moſſop engages Miſs Catley.—Her great attraction.—Riot at Crow-ſtreet.—It's fatal conſequences.—Franchiſes of Dublin.—Mr. Moſſop obliges the ſeveral Corporations at the Franchiſes.—The Lord Mayor beſpeaks a Play.

THE vice regal favour, which had on ſo many occaſions, been of infinite ſervice to the theatre-royal, operated, at the beginning of the enſuing ſeaſon, very powerfully. The new Lord Lieutenant and his Lady, the Earl and Counteſs of Northumberland, were juſt arrived, and very popular. The theatre opened, October, 1763, a few days after they commanded Othello, with the Virgin Unmaſked; and very often during the winter, honoured it with their preſence.

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In this place, I cannot help remarking, that to those chief governors who court popularity, no place can present a better opportunity of attaining it, than the theatre. Through the course of this work, I have had occasion to observe, that the more popular the Lord Lieutenant was, the oftener he frequented the theatre.

But, Mr. Barry's principal reliance was on his engagement with Mr. Sheridan, whose abilities and many virtues had justly endeared him to the public. This much injured gentleman, was at this time induced once more to revisit his native country. He had, during his absence, the honour of being preceptor to the queen, and had obtained a pension from his majesty, which had rendered his circumstances somewhat easier. He now returned with hopes, that the public, sensible of the wrongs he had suffered, might devise some means of recompenceing him.

Still more to weaken the adverse party, Mr. Barry had the address to bring over once more to his standard Mrs. Fitzhenry. The last three years she had spent at Smock-alley. Her return was of great service, and it might then be said

that

that Crow-ſtreet could exhibit tragedies, worthy the attention of the public, ſupported by Barry, Sheridan, Reddiſh, Heaphy, Jefferſon, Mrs. Fitzhenry, Miſs Oſborne, then Mrs. William Barry, and Mrs. Dancer.

In comedy, they could not boaſt ſo much; Mrs. Kennedy, from Drury-lane, was excellent in a peculiar line of characters; ſuch as the Old Maid, Mrs. Honeycombe, &c. but neither her age nor figure qualified her to lead in elegant comedy. Mr. Barry's greateſt ſtrength in that line was Mr. Wilkinſon. The late excurſions of this gentleman to Ireland, had proved ſo pleaſant and profitable, that we find him early this ſeaſon, poſſeſſed of much attraction, and drawing money to Mr. Foote's pieces, particulary his Mayor of Garret, which was then firſt brought out in Dublin, and performed ſeveral nights.

Mr. Wilkinſon's engagement, ended in January, 1764; when, after an excellent benefit, he ſet off for Scotland; and Mr. Macklin having joined Mr. Moſſop, the remainder of the ſeaſon, we find that Melpomene had entirely

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the aſcendancy, and that very few comedies were played in Crow-ſtreet.

Early in November, Mrs. Fitzhenry opened in Caliſta, and a few nights after, Mr. Sheridan came forward in Hamlet, a character he had ſuſtained with the greateſt reſpectability, both in London and Dublin. The firſt actreſſes then, did not think it beneath them to give force and dignity to the Queen. Mrs. Pritchard played it in London, Mrs. Fitzhenry in Dublin. The houſe was crowded to receive Mr. Sheridan, and the reiterated applauſes which marked his firſt entrance, evidently ſpoke the feelings of the audience on the return of a man, whom the world juſtly conſidered as an ornament to the ſtage, and an honour to the kingdom that gave him birth.

His next appearance was in Richard, which was graced with the preſence of the Lord Lieutenant and his Counteſs. After this, the two tragedians combined their ſtrength, and played Pierre, and Jaffier, Brutus, and Caſſius, King John, and the Baſtard, Haſtings, and Shore, Othello, and Iago, Deſdemona, Mrs. Dancer; Emelia, Mrs. Fitzhenry; Caſ-

talio,

talio, and Chamont. In many tragedies, we find the four: as All for Love, Marc Antony, and Ventidius, Octavia, and Cleopatra, Orestes, and Pyrrhus, Andromache, and Hermione, Alexander, and Clytus, Roxana, and Statira. The Penitent, Horatio, Mr. Sheridan; Sciolto, Mr. Heaphy; Altamont, Mr. T. Barry; Lothario, Mr. Barry, Lavinia, Mrs. T. Barry; Calista, Mrs. Fitzhenry.

Towards the latter end of the season, business beginning to decline, Mr. Barry engaged a company of Italian Burletta performers, who opened the 28th of April, by command, with the Burletta of La Serva Padrona, or the Maid the Mistress. The characters, by Signor and Signora Guerina, &c. but, I believe, the success of these Burletta's was but very moderate, and scarcely answered the expence attending them.

'Tis now time to take a view of Mr. Mossop's operations. He judiciously, seemed sensible of the power of his competitor in tragedy; therefore, instead of encountering him in the line where his principal strength lay, he directed the force of his own operations to comedy and musical pieces. His retaining Mrs. Abington, and

Mrs.

Mr. Ryder, and his junction with Mr. Macklin, were of great ſervice to him in the former; and fortune pointed out an object, which abundantly anſwered his purpoſe, in the latter.

Miſs Catley's vocal powers, and uncommon abilities, were then juſt beginning to captivate the public, in London. Mr. Moſſop invited her over to this kingdom, and ſhe arrived late in December, 1763. Her firſt appearance was in Polly, in the Beggar's Opera, in which the applauſe ſhe gained was uncommon. She pleaſed beyond expreſſion, and ſo highly eſtabliſhed her fame, that even in the enſuing Chriſtmas holidays, the moſt unfaſhionable part of the ſeaſon, the houſes were crowded each night, with the firſt auditors in the kingdom, to her Polly.

Opera now began to rear her head, and take the lead in the attractions of the drama; and ſhe has ever ſince retained this powerful charm, in a very ſuperior degree. Miſs Catley inſtantly became a decided favourite. The Beggar's Opera was often repeated, and her Roſetta, in

Love

Love in a Village, drew much money to the theatrical treasury.

Mr. Mossop, although his genius did not, by any means, incline to the laughter loving goddess, had yet selected an excellent comedy company. With Mrs. Abington, Mr. Macklin, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Dexter, Mrs. Lessingham, from Covent-garden, who had played a few nights in the latter season at Crow-street, Mr. Stamper, Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Kelf, Miss Ambrose, Miss Usher, Mr. Walker, &c. many comedies were performed with much credit.

Few particulars of this season remain worth noticing; one, however, was attended with circumstances too shocking, to be passed over in silence.

On one of the crowded nights, at Crow-street, in the month of April, 1764, two gentlemen, leading some ladies to their chairs, were grossly insulted by a number of servants, waiting at the box doors, who not only abused them in the foulest manner, but followed them on their return into the box room, till prevented by the centinels then on duty. Not content with this

outrage, a number of them, threw their lighted flambeaux, into the box room, crying out at the same time, fire! fire!

Such an outcry, joined to the smoke of the flambeaux, occasioned an instantaneous terror, easier to be imagined, than described. Perhaps there is not a more alarming circumstance in nature, than that of upwards of a thousand people, confined in a theatre, being terrified with the sudden exclamation of fire, without knowing from whence the danger arises, or how to avoid it. Terror magnifies the most petty trifles into objects of alarm, and fear takes from people the power of pursuing proper measures for their safety.

The consternation this alarm excited, instantly communicated itself to every individual in the house. The cry of fire resounded from every part of the theatre. The cries and shrieks of the females, and the efforts of the men to extricate themselves, from this supposed danger, produced a scene truly terrific, and shocking. The house was cleared as soon as possible. The mistake was discovered, but not till a great deal of mischief had happened.

Numberless

Numberless were the accidents this wicked contrivance produced. Happily however, only two lives were lost. Those were, Mr. Eaton, a Butcher of Ormond Market, and his wife, who were trampled to death, by the violent pressure of the crowd from the upper gallery. What added to the poignancy of the distress was, they left behind them eight children, totally unprovided for!

Where there are proper objects, the public is never deficient in compassion, and humanity. On this occasion, they embraced every opportunity of manifesting this goodlike disposition. A benefit, free of every expence, was announced at each theatre. Every performer of consequence came forward, and was eager to offer his services. Each night was crowded; besides which, there was a subscription set on foot, which altogether raised a sum that provided very respectably for these unhappy orphans, thus bereft of their parents.

Mr. Sheridan, who still laboured under difficulties, which his former misfortunes had involved him in, having nearly finished his engagement with Mr. Barry, proposed giving lectures

on oratory, and the English language, in the Music Hall, early in May. This his creditors, ungenerously, and injudiciously, prevented him from; and he was obliged to acquaint the public, that though he had appropriated three fourths of his income to the discharge of his debts, yet such was their cruelty, that the safety of his person would have been endangered if he had ventured to go on with his lecture.

In June, 1764, Mr. Shuter again visited Dublin, and appeared in several of his favourite characters, at Smock-alley, which with his support, kept open till the beginning of August, during which time, Love in a Village, Thomas and Sally, Comus, The Devil to Pay, &c. were often repeated.

Mr. Barry, notwithstanding his exertions, after an unsuccessful campaign, closed in June, leaving Mr. Mossop in possession of the field, and repaired, as usual, to Cork and Limerick, where he experienced better fortune; which the excellence of his company highly entitled him to; as may be seen by the following bill.

By

By Permission of the Right Worshipful JOHN SMITH, Esq; Mayor of CORK.

For the Benefit of the CHARITABLE INFIRMARY.

St. Mary Shandon.

At the Theatre-Royal, on Friday next the 14th of September, 1764.

Will be presented a Tragedy call'd, The

DISTRESSED MOTHER.

Orestes	-	Mr. Barry,
Pyrrhus	-	Mr. Heaphy,
Pylades	-	Mr. Mahon,
Phœnix	-	Mr. Vernel,
Hermione	-	Mrs. Fitzhenry,
Cleone	-	Mrs. Glover.

Andromache, (with the original Epilogue,) Mrs. DANCER.

End of the 3d act, the Dust Cart Cantata, by Mr. *Messink.*

End of the 4th act, a Hornpipe by a young Gentleman.

To which will be added a Farce, (not acted these two years) call'd

FLORA; or, HOB in the WELL.

Friendly

Friendly	-	Mr. Mahon,
Young Hob	-	Mr. Glover,
Sir Tho. Testy	-	Mr. Mynitt,
Old Hob	-	Mr. Vernel,
Dick	-	Mr. Hamilton,
Betty	-	Mrs. Eltard,
Flora	-	Mrs. Glover.

Boxes, 4*s.* 4*d.* Pit, 3*s.* 3*d.* Gallery, 2*s.* 2*d.* To begin precisely at 7 o'clock. Places in the Boxes to be taken of Mr. Keane, Box-keeper, and Tickets to be had of Mr. Bourne, House-keeper, the Charitable Infirmary, St. Mary Shandon, and at the Printers hereof.

A circumstance happened, at this time, which contributed towards raising the popularity of Mr. Mossop. The triennial perambulation of the city liberties, or riding the franchises, as they were then stiled, was so much the fashion, that on those occasions the different corporations went to very great expence, in preparing the decorations and paraphernalia, which distinguished their respective bodies; and those only who have been spectators of the magnificence, novelty, variety, and splendour, of this singular

cavalcade,

cavalcade, can be proper judges of the effects it produced.

From the great variety of dresses which the wardrobe of a theatre must necessarily consist of, it was always in a managers power, to assist in a peculiar manner such representations; and so amply did Mr. Mossop contribute to the brilliancy and pageantry, of the present, that several of the corporations returned their acknowledgments to him in the public papers, "for lending them habits, ornaments, and decorations which added considerably to the splendour of the franchises."

On this occasion also, the Right Honourable William Forbes, then Lord Mayor, and in high favour with the city, desired a play, August 14th, *For the entertainment of the Aldermen, the Sheriffs, and the Master, Wardens, and Brethren of the city of Dublin.*

The play chosen was Richard the 3d; Richard, Mr. Mossop; King Henry, Mr. Aickin; Tressel, Mr. Ryder; Duke of York, Master Dawson; Lady Anne, Mrs. Kelf; Queen, Mrs. Usher.

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I muſt confeſs, I think it was a particular play for the Lord Mayor to chuſe, and I hope Mr. Moſſop took care to have his repreſentative more reſpectable, and better attended, than uſual. The farce was the True Born Iriſhman; Murrough O'Dogherty, Mr. Macklin; Councellor Hamilton, Mr. Aickin; Count Muſhroom, Mr. Ryder; Mrs. O'Dogherty, Mrs. Kelſ.

CHAP. VIII.

Mr. Moſſop engages another Burletta Company.—List of the Performers at both Houſes.—Mr. Collins's appearance.—Muſical ſtruggle at the rival Theatres.—Beggar's Opera at both.—Maid of the Mill.—Saliſbury at Crow-ſtreet.—Tenducci's firſt appearance at Smock-alley.

THE next ſeaſon produced much novelty at both theatres. Mr. Moſſop, who had experienced the good effects of his late muſical engagements, reſolved to perſevere in that popular ſpecies of entertainment. He renewed his agreement with Miſs Catley, and entered into articles with a new Burletta company.

Signiora Spiletta had, the ſeaſon before, performed at the Opera houſe in London, with uncommon eclat. Connected with this celebrated Italian, were her father, ſiſter, and ſeveral relations. Her brother was the ſince well known, and much admired, Signior Tomaſo

Giordani, whose musical compositions will ever be held in the highest estimation, whilst taste or judgment exist. Very capital dancers were also engaged, and we find those exotics constituted a leading feature in the ensuing winter's amusements.

As it will be impossible for me to follow all the new performers, through their first appearances, and as the state of the companies was much the same through the season, I shall present my reader with a list of each as they stood November, 1764.

Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Mr. Barry,	Mr. Mossop,
Mr. T. Barry,	Mr. Ryder,
Mr. Brown,	Mr. Sowdon,
Mr. Macklin,	Mr. Dawson,
Mr. Sparks,	Master Dawson,
Mr. Heaphy,	Mr. Wilder,
Mr. Mahon,	Mr. Aickin,
Mr. Kennedy,	Mr. Waker,
Mr. Glover,	Mr. Lewis,
Mr. Hurst,	Mr. Collins,
Mr. Usher,	Mr. White,

Crow-

Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Mr. Vernel,	Mr. Caley,
Mr. Hamilton,	Mr. Harper,
Mr. Ellard,	Mr. Remington,
Mr. Glenville,	Mr. Fawcet,
Mr. Auſtin,	Mr. Reilly,
Mr. Morris,	Mr. Connor,
Mr. Wm. Palmer,	Mr. Smith,
Mr. Mynitt,	Mr. Reynolds,
Mr. Meſſink,	Mr. Jagger,
Mr. Lee,	Mr. Jefferies,
Mr. Billinghurſt,	Mr. Nepecker,
Mr. Slageldoir,	Mr. Saunders,
Signior Colpi, ſlack Rope,	Equilibriſt.
Venetians & Children.	

Mrs. Dancer,	Miſs Catley,
Mrs. Abington,	Mrs. Kelſ,
Mrs. Fitzhenry,	Miſs Willis,
Mrs. Kennedy,	Mrs. Wilder,
Miſs Maſon,	Miſs Ambroſe,
Miſs Aſhmore,	Mrs. Barry,
Mrs. Glover,	Mrs. Johnſon,
Mrs. Ellard,	Mrs. Harſry,

Crow-

Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Miſs Parſons,	Mrs. Packenham,
Mrs. Hamilton,	Mrs. Dunlap,
	Miſs Dunlap,
	Miſs Garvey.

Burletta at Smock-Alley.

Signior Tomaſo Giordani,
Signior Franciſco Giordani,
Signior Peretti,
Signior Guerini,
Signiora Spiletta,
Signiora Giordani,
Signiora Guerini.

Smock-alley theatre opened, October 15th, with Mr. Moſſop's Richard, and Mr. Ryder's Scapin. But as their hopes reſted chiefly on muſical performances, the Beggar's Opera, with new accompaniments, by Signior Giordani, was next brought forward; which, with Love in a Village, and the new Burletta, were performed alternately, ſix or ſeven nights each. The burletta pleaſed much; Spiletta was a great favourite; but Catley's voice, and whimſical ſtile of

ſinging,

ſinging, ſoon took the lead, and drew crowded houſes.

Mr. Collins, whom the public have lately beheld with infinite pleaſure, entertaining an audience for three hours, entirely by the force of genuine humour, and native comic talents, made his firſt appearance on the boards of Smock-alley, in Young Mirabel, in the inconſtant, and proved a very reſpectable acquiſition to the Iriſh ſtage. I find his name afterwards, for Juſtice Woodcock, Dick in the Confederacy, Peachum, Sir Francis Wronghead, Baſtard in Lear, Angelo, Gibby, &c.

The early part of Mr. Barry's ſeaſon proved rather profitable. To the novelty of the Venetians, and rope dancing, he prefixed his ſtrongeſt tragedies. His receipts were encreaſed, but his expences were enormous. When public curioſity abated, he had recourſe to a ſtratagem, which, as it was attacking the enemy on their own ground, anſwered his purpoſe, equal to his moſt ſanguine expectations.

The rage for Catley was this time ſo great, that it was highly expedient to endeavour to

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stem the torrent. Conscious that his musical performers were not equal to those of Smock-alley, he boldly announced the Beggar's Opera, Captain Macheath by himself; Polly by Mrs. Dancer; and Lucy by Mrs. Abington. The novelty of the attempt, excited the curiosity of the public, and it drew much money.

Certain it is, that though his vocal abilities could not enable him to compass the common tunes of this well known piece, yet his figure, manner, and acting of this intrepid highwayman, made ample amends, and perhaps, he altogether gave a portrait of this favourite character, equal, if not superior, to any that ever attempted it, since the original. He really was, the fine, gay, bold faced, gentleman of the road.

Gay's Polly received from Mrs. Dancer, a delicacy, a pathos, and interesting colouring which few vocal performers have ever been able to give it. Mrs. Abington's Lucy, was esteemed a capital piece of acting.

The remaining parts of the opera were supported, in the following manner: Peachum, Mr.

Mr. Macklin; Lockit, Mr. Sparks; Mat o'th' Mint, Mr. Mahon; Jenny Diver, Mrs. Mahon; Mrs. Peachum, Mrs. Kennedy.

The first night, it brought 160*l.* the second 125*l.* the third 50*l.* the fourth 120*l.* the fifth 97*l.* It was afterwards performed several nights, in the course of the season, with varied success.

To oppose this new, and unexpected stroke, Mr. Mossop thought of another, equally nouvelle. Miss Catley, had then got such possession of the public, that whatever she attempted, was sure to meet with uncommon approbation. She had long drawn houses in Polly. She now assumed the opposite character, and figured in the rakish, joyous Macheath.

This had the desired effect, and excited curiosity in a very high degree, and the Beggar's Opera proved another source of dispute and contention, at Smock-alley; Mr. Collins played Peachum; Mr. Wilder, Mat o'th' Mint; Mrs. Wilder, Lucy; Mr. Rider, Mrs. Slammakin; Mrs. Usher, Diana Trapes; and Miss Dunlop, Polly. It was, with Love in a Village, given once

once a week during most of the season. The former was played fifteen nights: the latter, ten.

Mrs. Abington's return to Smock-alley theatre, about the middle of the Season, caused a new revolution in the Beggar's Opera; she played Polly, and Signiora Spiletta appeared in Lucy.

The latter was indeed an arduous task. Being almost unacquainted with the language, she was obliged to apologize to the public, before she performed it. But favourites often have a licence to be absurd, and in the present case, Spiletta got more applause, than if she had been a native.

Scarce were the merits of this musical struggle decided, when the comic opera of the Maid of the Mill, gave occasion for a fresh contest. This excellent opera was then performing, with the greatest success, at Covent-garden.

Both managers thought it an object, worth their utmost attention. The words of the opera were published, and equally free for both. But

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the music was in manuscript, and the sole property of the Covent-garden manager. From him Mr. Barry purchased it, and consequently imagined, he had in this instance, securely triumphed over his antagonist.

In this dilemma, Mr. Mossop found an unexpected resource, in the great abilities of Signior Giordani. It is a fact well established, that though the parts were writing out in Dublin for Mr. Barry, yet did Signior Giordani sit down, and new compose the entire opera of the Maid of the Mill, in full score, with all the accompaniments, in less than a fortnight: and it was written out, studied, the scenes painted, and the opera brought out, two nights before they were able to accomplish it at Crow-street.

The opera pleased much. The music did infinite credit to the genius of Signior Giordani. It was considered, by every judge, as a wonderful effort of the human mind: and to it were applied Pope's words,

"The sound becomes an echo to the sense."

I shall

I ſhould imagine, it will add to the entertainment of the reader, to compare the ſtrength of each company, in ſupporting the pieces in queſtion. The Maid of the Mill was thus performed, at each theatre.

	Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Lord Aimworth	Mr. Barry,	Mr. Ryder,
Sir H. Sycamore	Mr. Mahon,	Mr. Collins,
Fairfield	Mr. Glover,	Mr. Dawſon,
Ralph	Mr. Hamilton,	Mr. Waker,
Mervin	Mr. Palmer,	Mr. Jagger,
Giles	Mr. Morris.	Mr. Wilder.
Fanny	Mrs. Glover,	Sign^a. Spiletta,
Lady Sycamore	Mrs. Kennedy,	Mrs. Kelſ,
Theodoſia	Mrs. Mahon,	Mrs. Wilder,
Patty	Mrs. Dancer,	Miſs Catley.

At Smock-alley, the Maid of the Mill, ran nine nights, beſides benefits. At Crow-ſtreet, they gave up the conteſt after the fifth time.

Much about this period, the ſerious opera of Artaxerxes, was, for the firſt time, performed in this kingdom, at Smock-alley; Arbaces, by

Signior

Signior Passerini; Artaxerxes, Signior Peretti; Artabanes, Mr. Wilder; Rimenes, Mr. Ryder; Semira, Mrs. Haytrey; and Mandane, Miss Catley.

We may judge of the strength of the musical pieces this season, under Mr. Mossop, when we find the Beggar's Opera exhibited eleven nights, Love in a Village sixteen, Artaxerxes fourteen; besides the Maid of the Mill, Comus, the Jovial Crew, and the Italian Burlettas.

Catley closed her career, the 4th of May, in Rosetta, after which she sailed for England, being announced as engaged for the next winter, with her present manager, Mr. Mossop. Her departure put an end to the musical pieces.

Mr. Mossop closed the 19th of May, informing the public, that he intended opening speedily again, with English operas, having engaged several capital singers from England.

It is time now to return to Mr. Barry. Hard pushed by the vocal powers of his opponents, and burthened with a very heavy company, he found his finances much impaired; towards the

the end of this hard-fought campaign. Fortune however, ſeemed more propitious, when he confined his efforts within their proper ſphere.

The tragedy of the Counteſs of Saliſbury was, at this time, offered to his acceptance. The author was a native of this kingdom, a gentleman of good connections; and the piece poſſeſſed much merit. The language was flowery, the ſtory which was founded on Dr. Leland's Longſword Earl of Saliſbury, pathetic and intereſting. It was got up with care, and met with great ſucceſs.

Saliſbury was well adapted to diſplay the powers of Mr. Barry; and Mrs. Dancer, in the original part of the Counteſs, exhibited thoſe amazing abilities, which have ſo often ſince, enraptured the admirers of melpomene, and which have ſo deſervedly placed her at the very pinnacle of theatric excellence.

The Counteſs of Saliſbury was performed ſix nights, though brought out ſo late in the ſeaſon, and Mr. Barry finiſhed in July. Saliſbury was afterwards acted in the Hay-market, and Drury-lane.

A few

A few days after, Mr. Mossop, according to his promise, brough out his first new English opera, as he was pleased to stile it. This was Amintas, or the Royal Shepherd, in which the celebrated Signior Tenducci, so much admired in the musical world, first appeared. Alexander was performed by Signior Perretti, Agenor, Mr. Wilder; Thamyris, Miss Thomas, from Covent-garden, and Eliza by Signiora Cremonini, from the Opera house, their first appearance in this kingdom.

The uncommon vocal powers, and judgment, of Signior Tenducci, had already raised his fame, at most of the courts in Europe; nor did his merits make less impression in Dublin. He was allowed to be, by far the most capital foreign singer, that ever visited these kingdoms, and his reception was so flattering, that we find him embracing every opportunity of returning to this country.

Amintas and Alexander, were the only opera's performed at this time: but those were repeated twice a week, during the summer, and closed the beginning of October.

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In the interim, Mr. Barry was with a very capital company, performing at Cork, where, unrivalled, he gained reputation and profit.

There was alſo another very ſtrong detachment at this time at Drogheda. Amongſt the principal performers were, Mr. Macklin, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Auſtin, Mrs. Kelſ, Mrs. Auſtin, &c.

CHAP. IX.

Musical pieces continue to take the lead.—New performers.—Miss Ashmore first noticed.—Crow-street declines.—Dancing Dogs.—Catley's great reputation.—Success of Clandestine Marriage.—Death of Duval.—List of both companies.—Mr. Sheridan returns.—Receipts of his first four houses.—Miss Browne.—Mr. Jackson.—G. Alexander Steevens's Lectures.

AFTER a few weeks interval, Mr. Mossop commenced the operations of his next campaign with vigour, and opened October 21st, 1765, with Miss Catley in Macheath; Polly, Miss Thomas, a new Lucy; and Mr. Ryder's Scapin.

Tenducci's operas were continued, with a very moderate share of success, and a crowd of new performers imported or recruited from the country: as Mrs. Pearson, Mr. Tyler, Mr. Pearson,

Pearson, Mr. Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Gemen, Mr. Smith, Mr. Blisset, afterwards an actor of much merit.

Amongst the group, unnoticed and unknown, was Mr. Edwin, who in Sir Philip Modelove, first courted the acquaintance of the Irish audience. Long were the abilities of this eccentric actor obscured, nor could the profoundest dramatic judge then discover those talents, which nature had so liberally endowed him with; or foresee the extraordinary eminence he afterwards attained. Mr. Edwin was, at that time very young. He remained here two seasons, and we find him in Old Philpot, Lord Trinket, Justice Woodcock, &c.

This season Mr. and Mrs. Reddish changed sides and, with Mr. Glover, went over to Smock-alley. So much in fashion indeed was the custom, at this time, of performers changing from one manager to another, that it would be impossible with accuracy to follow them through their various theatrical transitions.

Operas still continued entirely the fashion at Smock-alley, and drew considerable sums to Mr.

Mossop's

Moſſop's treaſury. The new opera of Athridates, run upwards of a dozen nights.

In this piece, Miſs Aſhmore, ſince Mrs. Sparks, was firſt introduced to the public; ſhe ſung a pleaſing air, of "Deareſt Mother," much adapted to her powers, and in which ſhe was well inſtructed by Signior Tenducci. The audience were highly delighted with this new little favourite, who ſome years afterwards, charmed them in a variety of characters.

Towards the middle of the ſeaſon, like many others, ſhe changed ſides; and played Cupid in King Arthur, at Crow-ſtreet; ſhe there had part of a benefit, at which ſhe appeared in the Virgin Unmaſked.

It was with the utmoſt concern, Mr. Barry perceived his opponent crowned with ſucceſs, which his utmoſt exertions could not prevent. The credit and reputation of his theatre, had been for a long time gradually leſſening, and the certain conſequences appeared; ſalaries unpaid, and debts contracted, which he had not ability to diſcharge.

Thus disagreeably situated, he embraced an expedient which, though it procured him temporary relief, was attended with reproach and disgrace to the theatre. He introduced a new set of performers to the town. These were no other than Dutch dogs, and an Italian monkey, who, in a new pantomime, displayed those tricks which ought solely to be confined to their proper sphere, a booth, where sense and reason are set at defiance, and where an admirer of the drama would be ashamed to appear.

Nor were the common arts of opposition left untried. Performers, allured by empty promises, and imaginary honour, were continually changing their situation: and besides Miss Ashmore, whom I have just mentioned, Mr. and Mrs. Reddish, Miss Slack, Signiora Spiletta, Tenducci, Cremonini, with several others were enticed from Smock-alley to Crow-street.

The novelty of Tenducci, and the foreigners, was nearly exhausted; whilst the attractions of Catley, who adhered with honour to Mr. Mossop, encreased every night. She had at this time, nearly arrived at the zenith of her reputation

tion, and I believe I may venture to affirm, that she drew as much money to the Irish theatre, as any vocal performer ever did, either before or since; nor did she confine herself to one line of singing. She played Polly, Macheath, and Lucy. She relinquished Sally, and made a capital part of Dorcas, and gave up, what few capital singers would, Rosetta, and played Deborah Woodcock.

It would be tedious, and I am afraid unentertaining to my readers, to enter into the miniutiæ of each theatre; suffice it then to mention merely, what may serve to convey to them a just idea of the more essential and important articles.

The following anecdote was given me from respectable authority, and is now mentioned as a proof that actors are not always the best judges of pieces. Notwithstanding the uncommon merit, and extraordinary success of the Clandestine Marriage, the early part of this season at Drury Lane; a piece which one should imagine, only slightly to perise, were sufficient to make any reader of common understanding, pronounce it one of the best comedies in the English language; yet strange to relate, at the first reading of it

in the Green Room of Crow-ſtreet, in December, the whole company concurred in opinion, that it was not worth the trouble of getting up.

It was accordingly laid aſide, unil Mr. T. Barry's benefit. The novelty inclined him to have it ſtudied, and performed; when it pleaſed ſo wonderfully, that it was played twice a week at Cork the following ſummer, and many nights the enſuing winter.

Before I diſmiſs this ſeaſon, I muſt mention the death of Mr. Lewis Duval, the original proprietor of the Smock Alley theatre, and who, until his death, which was when he was upwards of ninety, had an annual benefit at that theatre.

Though much embarraſſed, yet not entirely diſheartened, by the ill ſucceſs of the two laſt campaigns, Mr. Barry once more prepared to meet his competitor for public favour, and ſeemed to take the field with a force ſuperior to that of his adverſary, as may be ſeen by the ſubjoined liſt.

Crow-

Crow-street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Mr. Barry,	Mr. Mossop,
Mr. T. Barry,	Mr. Duncan,
Mr. Macklin,	Mr. Edwin,
Mr. Brown,	Mr. O'Keefe,
Mr. Lewis,	Mr. Jefferies,
Mr. Heaphy,	Mr. Duffy,
Mr. Sparks,	Mr. Remington,
Mr. Dawson,	Mr. Ward,
Mr. Usher,	Mr. Waker,
Mr. Mahon,	Mr. Richardson,
Mr. Austin,	Mr. Jones,
Mr. Glenville,	Mr. Loveman,
Mr. Vernell,	Mr. Taylor,
Mr. Massey,	Mr. Foster.
Mr. Messink,	
Mr. Palmer,	
Mr. Maguire,	
Mr. Lee,	
Mr. Aldridge,	
Mrs. Dancer,	Miss Catley,
Mrs. Fitzhenry,	Mrs. Ellard,
Mrs. Kelf,	Miss Eaton,
Mrs. Glover,	Mrs. Loveman,

Signiora

Crow-Street.	*Smock-Alley.*
Signiora Cremonini,	Mrs. Jefferis,
Miss Slack,	Mrs. Colligan,
Miss Ashmore,	Miss & Mrs. Hutton,
Signiora Spiletta,	Miss Brewer,
Miss Hearn.	Mrs. Anstil,
	Miss Harris,
	Miss Vandermere,
	Miss Browne,
	Miss Ambrose,
	Michel, Shuter and Jackson, dancers.

From a view of the above, one would be apt to imagine that the advantage lay on Mr. Barry's side, but in reality it was the reverse; every effort of his at the beginning of the season, proved unsuccessful, whilst Catley brought crowded houses at the other theatre.

In this exigence Mr. Barry turned his eyes towards Mr. Sheridan, with whom he concluded a treaty, and who on this occasion was of great service. By accident it happens, that the receipts of Mr. Sheridan's first four houses, are

in

in my poſſeſſion, which for the readers information, I am happy to aſcertain.

I muſt premiſe that at this period the buſineſs in general was very bad. Love in a Village repeated five nights, never reached 30*l.* ſometimes not 14*l.* other receipts have deſcended ſo low as 10*l.* to his Hamlet there was 171*l.* 19*s.* 7*d.* Iriſh, Richard 113*l.* 15*s.* Cato 141*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* Hamlet, ſecond time 148*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.*

I am ſorry it is not in my power to follow him through the remainder of his characters, but, by the above ſpecimen we may readily perceive that he contributed much towards the re-eſtabliſhment of Mr. Barry's ſhattered finances; but even with this extraordinary aſſiſtance it was not in his power to ſave himſelf, and at the concluſion of the winter, he found he was more involved than ever.

Few occurrences worth mentioning happened, at either theatre, during the preſent ſeaſon. Mr. Moſſop ſtill preſerved the ſuperiority he had obtained, though in truth, he had very little reaſon to boaſt.

Amongſt

Amongst the new performers he introduced, at this time, was Miss Browne, daughter of Mr. Sowdon: an elegant figure, a pleasing singer, and possessed of much merit, both in tragedy and comedy; she played Polly six nights, then Rosetta, Patty, Fanny, in the Clandestine Marriage, &c.

This lady afterwards became the wife of Mr. Jackson, a gentleman of abilities, as a writer and actor, and of a most respectable character, who made his first appearance in Dublin much about the same time, with deserved reputation.

Mr. and Mrs. Jackson remained in Dublin several seasons, and sustained a principal line of business, in the varied walks of the drama, with much credit. Some years after, Mr. Jackson purchased the Edinburgh theatre and patent from Mr. Ross, the then patentee, where he continued manager untill very lately, with much credit and character.

About this period, Mr. George Alexander Stevens, for the first time, visited this kingdom, with his celebrated Lecture upon Heads, and exhibited

exhibited in the Little Theatre in Capel-ſtreet, with infinite applauſe. The novelty of his undertaking drew the attention of the public.

Though not poſſeſſed of much merit as an actor, yet he certainly delivered his lectures with vaſt humour, variety, and judgment; reputation and ſucceſs attended him in both kingdoms, and in the courſe of a few years, he acquired an independant fortune, ſolely by the repetition of this then ſingular ſpecies of entertainment.

CHAP. X.

Mr. Barry obliged to relinquish the contest.—Effects of it.—Mr. Mossop sole Manager.—Purchases both Theatres.—Opens in Crow-street, December, 1767.—Mr. Clinch's first appearance.—Miss Catley performs.—Mr. Brownlow Forde.—Mr. Sheridan, Mr. King, and Mrs. Abington, at the latter Season, 1768.

BUT every circumstance now seemed to indicate the rapid decline of the drama in Ireland. Novelty in a great measure, had lost its charms; rancour, and ill will, prevailed amongst the performers. The town was divided, and exhausted between the Barryists and Mossopians. Both parties were heartily tired of the contest, yet neither were willing to resign their pretensions.

The

The very great merits of the two managers procured them a number of zealous partizans, but theſe were not ſufficient to ſupport their reſpective theatres. The few moderate and diſcerning, beheld with concern, the ruin that attended the Dublin ſtage, from theſe diviſions, yet knew not how to remedy an evil, which every day's experience encreaſed, and rendered more apparent.

At length, the ſuperior genius of Mr. Moſſop prevailed. After a ſeven years conteſt, Mr. Barry was obliged to reſign the field to his then ſeemingly, more fortunate rival; having, during that time, experienced more chagrin, vexation, and diſappointment, than imagination can well conceive. Harraſſed in mind and body, he had laviſhed ſo many years of the prime of his life, and, inſtead of reaping the fruits of ſuch ſhining abilities, as nature had bleſſed him with, had incurred debts he could never diſcharge, ruined many perſons connected with him, and involved himſelf in difficulties, which during the remainder of his life, he could never ſurmount.

His, I cannot call him ſucceſsful, competitor, was not in a much more enviable ſituation. His

finances

finances were also much deranged, his credit impaired, and his resources nearly exhausted. However, he had the town now to himself, and he hoped that having accomplished so important a point, a few successful seasons would amply recompense him for the many disagreeable days he had spent in the endeavour to effect it.

The first step he took, was to obtain possession of both theatres, which, as he imagined, struck at the root of all future rivalship, and gave him leisure to recruit his shattered fortunes.

He played about a month in Smock-alley, whilst Crow-street was repairing, where he was aided by the novelty of Mrs. Fitzhenry, whose return from London was welcomed by her native audience, with that warmth and cordiality, which evinced how dear she was to them, and how high she stood in their estimation.

The 7th of December, 1767, Mr. Mossop came forward, for the first time, as sole monarch of Crow-street domains, in the character of Richard the Third. Curiosity however, did not produce the effect expected. The house

house was far from being crowded: the receipts amounting only to 82*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.* Irish money.

Nevertheless, several of his tragedies brought large sums of money to his treasury. The Orphan of China, in particular, one night reached 140*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Brown, ever a favourite with the public, was well attended, in his principal characters in comedy, and Mrs. Fitzhenry gave evident proofs, at her benefit, how respectable her interest was amongst all ranks. She took the Countess of Salisbury, and had 201*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.* Irish, in her house, which I believe, was as much as ever had then been known, on one night.

In the month of February, 1768, the tragedy of the Orphan was revived, for the purpose of introducing a young and new candidate for public favour. The character selected for his first appearance was Castalio, a favourite part of Mr. Barry's, and in which he had displayed such sweetness, tenderness, and variety. Arduous as the task was, our adventurer exceeded the most sanguine expectations of his friends, and impressed the town with the most lively hopes, that in

in this youthful hero, they had found an excellent substitute for their departed favourite.

Curiosity, and connections, drew numbers the first night which amounted to 193*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.* and so highly was the audience delighted with the performance of this promising son of Thespis, that the play, in the course of a few weeks, drew a number of respectable audiences. His next attempts were Jaffier, Lothario, and Essex, which were attended with an equal degree of success.

Fame at length, proclaimed the name of this promising actor to be Clinch, a young gentleman of respectable family and connexions, and who had received a liberal education. The public certainly had every reason to expect a valuable acquisition in him. Nature had been very bountiful. His figure was excellent, his face manly, and expressive; his voice strong, clear, impressive, possessed of great variety, and many of its tones bore a great resemblance to their much loved Barry's.

Time has since proved their conjectures were well founded. The public are at present well acquainted

acquainted with his various merits, and he is not only justly considered as one of the principal ornaments of the Irish stage, but also universally beloved and esteemed, for the many virtues which adorn his private character.

Though in possession of the town, Mr. Mossop did not neglect presenting it with every novelty in his power; and none could be more acceptable than its darling Catley, who was engaged for six nights, and charmed once more with her musical powers.

A Mr. Brownlow Forde, also made his appearance in Scrub, whilst Mr. Mossop, by way of variety, for it certainly could not be for its excellence, endeavoured to represent the easy, elegant, fashionable Archer. Mr. Forde, afterwards played Sir Joseph Wittol, Brisk, &c.

Mr. Sheridan, who at this time was delivering his lectures at the Music-hall in Fishamble-street, was also prevailed on, towards the end of the season, to perform three of his principal characters; Hamlet, Richard, and Cato, at each of which times, he amply experienced

a continuance

a continuance of public patronage and favour.

In the latter ſeaſon, 1768, Mr. King and Mrs. Abington once more viſited this metropolis, and appeared in moſt of their favourite characters. The Lord Ogleby of Mr. King was then new, and exceedingly popular. It was juſtly eſteemed one of the fineſt pieces of acting, the world ever beheld.

For many years, I have had the pleaſure of ſeeing this truly excellent actor, in this part, and can with juſtice affirm, that for correctneſs of conception, ſpirit of execution, and in ſhort, for every requiſite to conſtitute a finiſhed performance, I never beheld a more perfect repreſentation than his Lord Ogleby. The whimſical traits of the Old Man of Quality, debilitated by years and intemperance, yet retaining the inclinations, and affecting the vigour of youth, are by him exhibited with a ſpirit and fidelity, which we have ſeldom ſeen equalled. I ſhall not dread correction, when I aſſert, that the ſtage, in all its various departments, cannot at preſent, produce better performance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Much novelty in the season 1768,9.—Two new Ladies in the Beggar's Opera.—Mr. Cornely's, Mr. Saunders.—Mr. Foote.—The Devil upon two Sticks.—Rope Dancers.—Their ill success.—Mr. and Mrs. Walker, Miss Grosse.—Failure of the Padlock.—Miss Catley revives it.—The School for Rakes.—Mr. Mossop visits Cork.

THE following winter, 1768, Mr. Mossop resolved to give novelty 'till it cloyed the appetite. The first night, he presented a new Polly and Lucy, in the Beggar's Opera. The former was a Miss Hudson, the latter a Miss Reade; they both possessed a moderate share of merit, and were tolerably well received.

A few nights after, Mr. Cornely's made his debut in Ralph in the Maid of the Mill, and from his first entrè stamped an impression on the audience,

audience, which his merit afterwards amply confirmed.

Mr. Cornelys was followed by a Mr. Saunders, from Drury-lane, in Polonius, and Mrs. Wright in the Queen. The next night Mrs. Saunders, formerly Miss Reynolds, an actress of real intrinsic merit, came forward in Violante in the Wonder, and Combrush in the Honest Yorkshireman. These novelties however, had no effect, and the theatre promised to be unfashionable and unfrequented.

This unfavourable prospect made Mr. Mossop hasten his intended operations. In November, Mr. Foote's new comedy of The Devil upon Two Sticks was got up, on purpose to introduce this eccentric hero again to this kingdom. The first night was commanded by the new and popular Lord Lieutenant, Lord Townshend; the house was crowded, the receipts 166*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* and the piece succeeded equal to his most sanguine expectations. Mr. Foote at this time was of infinite service. He seldom played to less than an hundred pounds, and sometimes to an hundred and thirty.

Mr.

Mr. Moſſop's engagement with Le Nemora, Semanzati, and Signiora Roſſoli, was not ſo fortunate. Though excellent in their performances on the rope, the public were diſguſted with ſuch exhibitions. They had not attraction the firſt night, which amounted to only 39*l.*

I ſincerely wiſh the public were ever of the ſame mind: and, whilſt their bounty ſhould enable managers to provide the nobleſt, and moſt rational entertainment, the human mind can receive, a ſelection of the various beauties of the drama, to baniſh ſuch ſpecies of entertainment, to their proper ſphere of action.

Neceſſity, almoſt always, forces managers to reſources their judgment condemns, and there are few inſtances where they have been adopted, till every other exertion has failed. In ſuch caſes, I muſt confeſs, I think them more to be pitied, than condemned.

The remainder of the ſeaſon glided away, without any very remarkable occurrence.

Mr. and Mrs. Walker, after paſſing a few years at Covent-garden, returned to this kingdom, and

and proved an addition to the Irish stage. Mr. Walker had much merit in tyrants, as Barbarossa, Timurkan, Bajazet, and Mrs. Walker great vivacity, life and spirit, in the Chambermaids.

A Miss Grosse made her first appearance in Lady Townly, for which she had hardly a requisite. Her second attempt, however, rectified this mistake, and in Rosetta, she gave hopes of adding to the entertainment of the public, to whom she was afterwards known by the name of Mrs. Barre. She had a strong, clear, commanding voice, and afterwards proved a useful member of the dramatic society.

Notwithstanding the general success of musical pieces of merit, the very excellent, and at present popular, comic opera of the Padlock, was at this time an exception. It was brought out in January, 1769, with every advantage, after Mr. Mossop's Hamlet, to 80*l.* when, so little impression did it make, that the second night there was only 51*l.* the third, 41*l.* after which, it was obliged to be tacked to Mr. Mossop's strong tragedies.

Yet

Yet notwithstanding this, it is certain that there is not a more pleasing musical afterpiece in the English language, or one possessed of more merit, either in character, incident, or musical composition. Indeed, it is the only instance I ever knew or heard, of its failing. Few pieces, I believe were ever oftner repeated, drew more money, or gained more applause.

The original cast of it in Dublin was as follows: Leander, Mr. J. Bannister, from Drury-lane, Mungo, Mr. Wilder; Don Diego, Mr. Vernel; Ursula, Mrs. Saunders, and Leonora, Mrs. Hudson.

Miss Catley, still in fashion, visited Dublin in March, 1769, and, as usual, brought crowded houses to her favourite characters, especially to Comus, which at that time seemed to be the leading piece, in which her Euphrosine will be long remembered, and as it ought to be, recorded amongst the excellencies of dramatic performances. Her playing Leonora, in the Padlock, at this time, first gave it a reputation, which it has ever since maintained.

The

The comedy of the school for rakes, the production of our ingenious country woman, Mrs. Griffith, was then performing with eclat at Drury-lane. Mr. Mossop presented it to the public, towards the latter end of the campaign, when it proved highly acceptable, and was often repeated.

The season, which was undisputed and profitable, closed early in June, 1769, and Mr. Mossop, for the first time, visited Cork, where his fame had long before rendered the public impatient to gratify their curiosity, by beholding, such uncommon merit, and eager to join the universal opinion, which concurred in admiring his extraordinary excellencies. He brought great houses, and returned to Dublin, the latter end of September following, to commence his winter operations.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Mr. Mossop opens, September, 1769.—Indifferent success.—Miss Ashmore rising.—New performers.—Mossop plays alternately at each house.—Little Theatre in Capel-street opens.—The managers of it.—False delicacy.—The two companies compared.—Success of Capel-street house.—Lionel and Clarissa at both houses.—Close of the season.—Situation of the parties.

NOTWITHSTANDING Mr. Mossop opened early, the 11th of October, 1769, with the Polly of Catley, who was announced only for a few nights, yet the beginning of his season was not very auspicious. This great favourite had at that time lost part of her attraction, and an indisposition confining her after she had played a few nights, the manager was himself obliged to come forward, in Hamlet, which brought a tolerable house, 95*l.*

With

With every requisite of face, figure, voice and abilities, Miss Ashmore, then just rising in her profession, began to attract general notice, and with irresistible force, put in her modest claim to public favour, a claim which was universally allowed, and which, for many years, she most deservedly enjoyed, without interruption.

Amongst the parts she was then most noticed in, were Polly and Lucy, in the Beggar's Opera, Rosetta, Arethusa, in the Contrivances, Leonora in the Padlock, Patty in the Maid of the Mill, Phillida, Sally, Ophelia, Leonora, Revenge; Irene, Barbarossa; Cordelia, Lear; Emeline in King Arthur, Flora in the Wonder; Portia, Hypolita, Kind Impostor, Cherry, &c. So promising an actress had not been seen in Ireland a long time, and we shall find that she fully answered the high opinion conceived of her great talents.

Amongst the new performers of the season, were Miss Glassington, who appeared in Violante; Mr. and Mrs. Graham, in Scrub and Mrs. Sullen; Miss Mansell, for the first time on any stage, in Juliet. Besides these, the manager presented the town with Rope Dancers, equilibrists

equilibrists on the wire, &c. in every form and variety.

In possession of both theatres, Mr. Mossop indulged his fancy by playing by turns in each. Tragedies, which alone brought money, at Crow-street; comedies, with the rope and wire, at Smock-alley. Public taste was never more conspicuous than on this occasion. Tragedies were seldom performed to less than to ninety or an hundred pounds, whilst the performances on the wire and rope seldom ammounted to 40*l.* often under 20*l.*

Tamerlane was revived about this time, and brought several houses. Mr. Mossop's Bajazet, most certainly was amongst his best performances, and added much to his reputation. Tamerlane, Mr. Heaphy; Moneses Mr. Clinch; Axalla, Mr. Bannister; Selima, Miss Glassington, Arpasia, Mrs. Fitzhenry.

The theatrical world may justly be considered as an epitome of the world at large. Her empires have as great a variety of interests, and are subject to as many vicissitudes and revolutions. Firmly as Mr. Mossop thought himself seated

on the dramatic throne of this kingdom, yet did he find conspiracies formed against him, which, though at first he disregarded them, yet did the hand of time mature and ripen into a success he thought impossible.

Lulled into perfect security, by the certainty of having the two theatres of Crow-street and Smock-alley, he little imagined that a third could be opened. The event shewed how much he was mistaken.

The little theatre in Capel-street, had for many years been shut up, and appropriated to other uses. It was certainly very small; but even this was of advantage; as it could be fitted up at less expence, could be much easier filled, and consequently, derive more credit from less shew.

This revolution was concerted and compassed, with much address, and united the interests of Mr. Dawson, Mr. Mahon, and Mr. Wilkes. Dawson was the manager of this new erected company, and by the experience he had had, was, in many respects, equal to the task. He was active, industrious, and intelligent, well acquainted with the world, and prompt to improve

prove every opportunity fortune threw in his way. The theatre was elegantly ornamented and beautified; the ſcenes new painted, by Jolly. The wardrobe, as might be expected, light, but faſhionable, and ſhewy.

Every arrangement being adjuſted, in the beſt manner the times would permit, the new adventurers opened on Monday February 26th, 1770, with a new comedy, never performed in this kingdow, written by Hugh Kelly, Eſq; and then in reputation in London, called

FALSE DELICACY.

Repreſented in the following manner:

Colonel Rivers, Mr. Mahon;
From the Theatre-royal Covent-garden.
Cecil, Mr. Herbert;
Sir Harry Newburgh, Mr. Lewis;
Sidney, Mr. Glenville;
Lord Winworth, Mr. Wilkes;
Being his firſt appearance in this Kingdom.
Mrs. Harley, Mrs. Hoſkins;
From the Theatre-royal Drury-lane.
Lady Betty Lambton, Miſs Ambroſe;
Miſs Rivers, Mrs. O'Neill;

Sally, Mrs. Price;
And Miſs Marchmont, by Miſs Aſhmore;
With an occaſional Prologue ſpoken by Mr. Lewis.

To which will be added a Comic Opera, called

THE PADLOCK.

With alterations and additions by the author, as performed in London.

Don Diego, Mr. Glenville;
Leander, Mr. Wilkes;
Mungo, Mr. Mahon;
Urſula, Mrs. Hoſkins;
And the part of Leonora, by Miſs Aſhmore.

It muſt be acknowledged, that though there were ſeveral performers of the firſt merit in the new erected company, yet they could not, in numbers, or indeed abilities, compare with the veterans of Crow-ſtreet, nor could they, from any apparent circumſtances, flatter themſelves with the hopes of that ſucceſs, which crowned their adventurous ſchemes.

This

This obſervation will be better illuſtrated by a comparative view, at the commencement of the oppoſition.

Crow-Street.	*Capel-Street.*
Mr. Moſſop,	Mr. Lewis,
Mr. Clinch,	Mr. Dawſon,
Mr. Heaphy,	Mr. Mahon,
Mr. Duncan,	Mr. Wilkes,
Mr. Banniſter,	Mr. Glenville,
Mr. Wilder,	Mr. Herbert,
Mr. Graham,	Mr. Pearſon,
Mr. Hollocombe,	Mr. Tyrer,
Mr. Paſſerini,	Mr. Walſh,
Mr. Remington,	Mr. Beaver, &c.
Mr. Morris,	
Mr. Kelly,	
Mr. Brown,	
Mr. Fotteral,	
Mr. Richards,	
Mr. Chaplin,	
Mr. Spicer,	
Mr. White,	
Mr. Legge,	
Lenomora,	
Semanzati, &c.	

Crow-

Crow-Street.	*Capel-Street.*
Mrs. Fitzhenry,	Miſs Aſhmore,
Miſs Gatley,	Miſs Ambroſe,
Miſs Manſell,	Mrs. Hoſkins,
Miſs Glaſſington,	Mrs. Dawſon,
Mrs. Heaphy,	Mrs. Barre,
Mrs. Bardin,	Mrs. Price,
Miſs Vandermere,	Mrs. O'Neill, &c.
Mrs. Brown,	
Mrs. Hawtry,	
Mrs. Barry.	

From the above ſtatement, Mr. Moſſop might in ſome meaſure be juſtified, for holding in ſuch a contemptuous light, the new formed oppoſition. But, what human prudence could not foreſee, fortune ſpeedily accompliſhed.

Curioſity and intereſt, crowded Capel-ſtreet theatre, the firſt night, and the performances were received with the moſt unbounded applauſe. The new theatre, dreſſes, novelty of the play, and ſeveral of the performers, the brilliancy of every object and the ſpirit which animated the whole, operated with magical force, and eſtab-

liſhed a reputation, which afterwards proved of infinite ſervice.

What contributed eſſentially to the ſucceſs of the ſcheme, was the aſſiſtance which Mr. Lewis and Miſs Aſhmore rendered.

The former was, even at that early period, eſteemed one of the moſt promiſing young actors on the ſtage, and had ſupported a variety of characters, with the higheſt reputation.

The latter I have already mentioned. She was then an object of univerſal admiration, and poſſeſſed the favour of the town in an eminent degree. The new manager had the addreſs to attach her to his party, and ſhe proved of infinite ſervice to the cauſe. A fortunate circumſtance added Mr. Wilkes, to the number of favourites.

Alarmed at the progreſs of this unforeſeen danger, Mr. Moſſop uſed every effort, in his power, to counteract it's effects.

He brought forward thoſe tragedies in which he ſtood unrivalled, particularly his Coriolanus, with

with every pomp, and magnificence. He exhibited Catley in her Euphrosine, which used to have such attraction. He revived Woodward's popular pantomimes of Fortunatus, and the Sorcerer, and introduced in them the performances of Saunders on the wire, and Lenomora, on the rope; but all with very little effect. His expences were heavy, his receipts were bad, and his competitors gained ground, though rather slowly.

While matters were in this situation, a circumstance occurred, which decided the contest in favour of the new theatre.

Bickerstaff's opera of Lionel and Clarissa, was then performing with uncommon reputation, at Covent-garden. Relying on his own pieces, and the plan he had laid down, the evil genius of Mr. Mossop, prevented him from seizing the only opportunity, which might lead towards retrieving his embarrassed circumstances.

With Catley's fame and abilities, had he first presented this celebrated piece to the public, he most probably would have attracted to his theatre

that

that tide of ſucceſs, which his opponents ſo amply experienced.

Not ſo Mr. Dawſon's diſcerning eye beheld the advantages in proſpect. He inſtantly ſet about getting it up, with every care and expedition. The 2d of April, 1770, it was announced, for the firſt time in this kingdom, and on it's appearance, received that ſtamp of public approbation it has ever ſince ſo deeply retained.

Though Lionel and Clariſſa is certainly poſſeſſed of great merit, being an excellent comedy, independant of the muſic, which is in general, a capital ſelection, and though it ſtands deſervedly high in the eſtimation of the ſiſter kingdom; yet was it reſerved for the Iriſh audience, to receive it with that enthuſiaſm and partiality, which has ever peculiarly diſtinguiſhed its repreſentation in this kingdom.

The Clariſſa of Miſs Aſhmore, according to every opinion, was as affecting, natural, and intereſting a piece of acting, as had ever been ſeen: and the Jeſſamy of Mr. Wilkes, was conſidered, as the ſtandard of excellence. Every

other character of the opera, seemed to be also well supported.

The impression it made was extraordinary, and the effects visible. Whilst Mr. Mossop, with the strength of his company, was exhibiting to orders or empty benches, an early overflow marked every night this popular opera was announced.

Some idea may be formed of it's power, and uncommon attraction, from the number of times it was acted. Late as it was brought out, it run twenty six nights, and closed a season, that will always be distinguished in the theatrical annals of this kingdom.

Mr. Mossop when too late, saw his error, and endeavoured in vain to repair it. In about three weeks after it's appearance at Capel-street, it was brought out at Crow-street, with this ridiculous distinction: Jenny the Chambermaid, Miss Catley; the other characters by Mr. Wilder, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Heaphy, Mr. Bannister, Mr. Remington, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Hawtry, Mrs. Barry.

It

It languiſhed a few nights, and was then cut down into a farce, which compleatly finiſhed it in the opinion of every one.

The ſituation of the contending parties, at the cloſe of the campaign, may eaſily be conceived. With health impaired, and circumſtances much deranged, Mr. Moſſop's proſpects were of the moſt unpleaſant nature. Though the idol of the town, as an actor, and not cenſured as a manager, (a thing extremely difficult to avoid) he ſaw himſelf deſerted by that public, to whoſe ſervice he had devoted thoſe abilities ſo much admired. A ſtriking leſſon to every manager, how little he can depend on that empty bubble popularity!

Elate with their ſucceſs, the oppoſite party, indeed, exulted in the confidence of it's continuance. Time will tell, how far their expectations were anſwered.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Next Season begins, November, 1770.—Mr. Dodd.—Miss Young, at Capel-street.—Mr. Macklin ditto.—Smock-alley opens under the Lord Mayor.—Mr. Ryder returns.—His merit.—West Indian produced at Capel-street and at Smock-alley.—The Belcour of Messrs. Lewis and Mossop, contrasted.—Anecdote of Mr. Cumberland, and the West Indian at Cavan.

THE persevering industry of Mr. Dawson, seemed resolved to take every advantage of events so favourable. He obtained possession of Crow-street theatre, abandoned by Mr. Mossop, and transferred from it, the title of his majesties servants, to that of Capel-street.

During the summer, he also made several capital engagements. In particular, Mr. Macklin, Miss Young, and Mr. Clinch.

However,

However, notwithſtanding thoſe great advantages, it was rather late before either company took the field.

Capel-ſtreet was the firſt, which opened with it's new title, November 9th, 1770, with the Beggar's Opera, and the Anatomiſt. The former preſented no novelty; in the latter, Mr. Dodd made his firſt appearance, in Monſieur Le Medecin.

This gentleman, who has ſince diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the literary world, poſſeſſed theatrical abilities, which, if he had continued on the ſtage, and cultivated, would have gained him ſome eminence. His Frenchmen were excellent, and he diſplayed a good deal of merit, in ſeveral other characters.

In about a fortnight after, Miſs Young, from Drury-lane theatre, who was then advancing faſt to that eminence which ſhe ſpeedily attained, and which ſhe has ſince conſtantly preſerved, made her entrè in this kingdom, in Jane Shore. Haſtings, Mr. Lewis; Dumont, Mr. Clinch; Gloſter, Mr. Dawſon; and Alicia, Mrs. Burden.

Her

Her reception was ſuch as her merit amply juſtified: flattering, as her ſanguine hopes could form; and during the ſeaſon, ſhe ſupported a capital line, in tragedy and comedy, with increaſing reputation.

Mr. Macklin choſe his favourite character of Shylock, to receive the gratulations of his friends, on his reviſiting them, which on his appearance they loudly marked.

In the Merchant of Venice, we find Mr. O'Keefe's name, for the part of Gratiano, and ſpeedily after, in Filch, Fribble, Jeſſamy, in Lionel, in the room of Wilkes, who had left the company, Squire Richard, &c.

Againſt ſuch performers, Mr. Moſſop had but little to oppoſe. Smock-alley was once more fitted up, new painted and decorated, as well as circumſtances would allow, and as the city theatre, under the patronage of the Lord Mayor, opened on the 26th of November, with the tragedy of George Barnwell. The hero of the piece by Mr. L'Eſtrange, from the theatre Drury-lane, of whom little could be ſaid, and a Mrs. Day, in the Virgin Unmaſked.

From

From this ſpecimen, much was not to be expected. However, as his great reſource, the town was informed, that Mr. Ryder, who had been abſent from the capital for the laſt five years, was again engaged, and would ſpeedily make his appearance.

The interval of abſence had been ſpent in the country of Ireland, where he had conducted a company, which during that time he managed, with much credit and emolument to himſelf and his performers. The towns he chiefly viſited were, Kilkenny, Waterford, Sligo, Galway, Derry, Belfaſt, &c. where the general buſineſs was excellent, and the benefits lucrative.

Mr. Ryder on his return, opened in Sir John Reſtleſs, and was received by the audience with that warmth of friendly applauſe, which ever marked his appearance.

His preſence was of infinite ſervice to Mr. Moſſop's drooping affairs: for though he was not able entirely to ſtem the tide of popular favour, that continued to follow Capel-ſtreet theatre, yet he for a time upheld a cauſe, which, without

without his assistance, must have sunk under the pressure of accumulated misfortunes.

Ever distinguished, by the versatility, as well as excellence of his genius, Mr. Ryder even then, might be deemed a theatrical Atlas, who at that time, and for many years after, principally supported the heavy burthen of the Irish drama. This may easily be perceived by a review of the various characters he sustained, during a period of eleven or twelve years, when it might be truly said, he was almost every night before the public.

The favourite popular opera of Lionel, was often repeated at both houses, the early part of the season, but Capel-street still maintained the advantage, although Mr. Ryder was the Lionel at Smock-alley.

Mrs Young and Mr. Macklin, were of infinite service to the cause they espoused. The latter brought out his Love a la Mode, and Frueborn Scotchman, with every advantage which capital acting, aided by his instructions, could give. They were often repeated to good houses.

The

The Romp, in which Miſs Aſhmore obtained ſuch reputation, was firſt acted at this period, and has continued to be a leading object in dramatic exhibitions ever ſince. The comedy of 'Tis Well it is no Worſe, was alſo performed at this time.

The ſame ability which had ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed the Capel-ſtreet manager laſt ſeaſon, was of infinite ſervice during the preſent.

Mr. Cumberland had, in the early part of the winter, brought out his comedy of the Weſt Indian, with a ſucceſs ſuperior almoſt to any ever known. Its great and extraordinary fame, rendered it an object of the firſt magnitude to both theatres.

Capel-ſtreet, however, had the good fortune to produce it firſt to the public, and, it muſt be confeſſed, with much greater advantage than it could be given by Mr. Moſſop.

On Tueſday, February 19th, 1771, it was announced, for the firſt time in this kingdom. Belcour, Mr. Lewis; Enſign Dudley, Mr. Clinch; Stockwell, Mr. Holocombe; Captain Dudley,

Mr.

Mr. Kane; Varland, Mr. Herbert; and Major O'Flaherty, Mr. Dawſon; Lady Ruſport, Mrs. Barry; Louiſa Dudley, Miſs Aſhmore, and Miſs Ruſport, Miſs Young.

The ſame ſucceſs, which attended this excellent comedy in London, purſued it here. The public was charmed with a piece which, with uncommon merit, preſented ſo amiable a portrait of an Iriſh gentleman, and in Major O'Flaherty, united the brave veteran ſoldier, with the man of feeling, whoſe heart was replete with the nobleſt impulſes of humanity.

And whilſt they admired the piece, they could not help applauding the actors, whoſe merits were never more conſpicuous than in this comedy. The Belcour of Mr. Lewis has ſo often been the ſubject of panegyric, that to mention it here would be uſeleſs: Mr. Dawſon's Major, Miſs Aſhmore's Louiſa, and Miſs Young's Charlotte, were truly characteriſtic.

Such was its reputation, that they had four or five crouded houſes to it, before it could be produced at Smock-alley, and then it did very little. It was not the faſhion, and Mr. Moſſop

continued

continued playing it to houſes compoſed of orders, whilſt at Capel-ſtreet, there was an overflow every night.

It certainly could not be neceſſity which induced Mr. Moſſop to attempt the ſprightly, elegant, vivacious Belcour, ſo totally oppoſite to his own manner. But whatever was the motive, it helped to give additional force to the finiſhed Weſt Indian of the other houſe: and though Mr. Moſſop's merits as a tragedian, were the univerſal theme of praiſe and admiration, yet his warmeſt admirers could not but confeſs his great deficiency, and total want of manner, for this hero of comedy.

At the time this admirable comedy was performing, with the higheſt reputation in Dublin, as well as in London, the author happened to be on a viſit at a Mr. Cottingham's, a gentleman of great reſpectability and fortune, at the town of Cavan, in the north of Ireland.

At this very juncture, a company of players happened to be performing there. The news of his arrival being ſpread abroad, it inſpired them with the idea of ſeizing the golden opportunity

tunity, and whilst he remained in the country, of performing his favourite comedy, which, from his being so well known and on the spot, they judged would receive every support and encouragement from his friends.

Full of this project, they set about studying the parts, with the greatest alacrity, and the most profound secrecy, and the poor author one evening had the unspeakable mortification, without the least notice, to find the comedy of the West Indian, "*written by R. Cumberland, Esq;*" and a long puff about it's success in London, and the two houses in Dublin, announced for representation the next night.

This, though not very pleasing he was not only obliged to submit to, but was also forced to attend this very extraordinary exhibition.

About an hour before the time of beginning, a servant came to keep places for Mr. Cottingham, Mr. Cumberland, and a large party. This news struck the company into the greatest panick. They had not an idea of his coming to see them, and, almost petrified with fear, that single

ſingle circumſtance drove the little they did know, entirely out of their heads.

A little before the beginning, Mr. Cumberland and his party came into the theatre. The appearance of it did not prepoſſeſs him much in its favour. It was a temporary building, as is uſual in ſuch caſes, erected in the town hall. The ſtage, raiſed two or three feet: the audience part, a range of ſeats, divided by a thin partition, into pit and gallery.

In the front of the pit, was Mr. Cumberland ſeated; the houſe crowded, every expectation raiſed on high, and all eyes turned on the author, when the curtain drew up, and diſcovered the manager ſeated, for Stockwell, at a table, with a book of the play before him, to refreſh his memory in caſe of accident, and Stukely waiting; when, caſting his eyes on the author, it effectually finiſhed him.

Had not Mr. Cumberland been there, he might, in the theatrical phraſe, have buſtled through; that is, he might have known the purport of the part, and where the original language failed him, ſubſtituted his own, ſo that an audience

dience, unacquainted with the piece, could not easily perceive where he was at a loss; but here, conscious of his being deprived of that resource, the little he did know his fear hindered him from recollecting; and, instead of several pages of description, developing the plot of his marriage, and the birth of the hero of the piece, after a long pause, he said, "*Belcour is arrived.*"

Confounded at this unexpected speech, Stukely, after some hesitation, replied, "*I believe he "is Sir.*" Another long stand ensued, when on popped Mr. Barret, (well known in the Irish theatric world,) for Belcour!

Now this gentleman, though possessed of much merit in a peculiar line, and an admirable figure for the Jew in the School for Scandal, was by no means calculated, in any respect, to convey the idea of a young, volatile, elegant, fiery, West Indian.

At the appearance of Mr. Barret, for this peculiar favourite of the author, the whole house, in spite of their respect for the writer, burst into an involuntary and loud laugh, which continued

for

for ſome minutes, and ſerved to increaſe the confuſion of the actors.

But Mr. Barret was very perfect, and ſoon recovering himſelf, the ſcene went on with tolerable compoſure, till the appearance of Major O'Flaherty, who, as the company was rather thin, was obliged to be doubled by the manager with Stockwell.

This new and unexpected ſtroke, produced another roar of applauſe, and entirely completed the confuſion and vexation of the poor author, who, unable to bear this cruel mangling of ſo excellent a comedy, would have withdrawn, but was prevented by his numerous friends, many of whom having ſeen it in London and Dublin, enjoyed the preſent repreſentation with the higheſt pleaſure. The more laughable and ludicrous the performance was, the more acceptable it was to them, and the more they enjoyed it.

Not ſo with Mr. Cumberland; his feelings were too much alive to be able to bear it with patience, and heartily glad was he when the concluſion of the play gave him leave to depart.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Continuance of the season 1771.—Cymon exhibited at both theatres.—Mr. Dawson's excellent generalship concerning it.—Brought out first at Capel-street.—The surprise occasioned by this.—Comparison of it's performance at each house.—Success of Capel-street.—Mr. Mossop's embarrassment.—His illness and benefit.—Is obliged to relinquish.—Capel-street managers take Crow-street, and perform there.—Mr. Isaac, Sparks and son, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson.—Mr. and Mrs. Barry at the latter season.—Closes August 3d, 1771.

BEFORE the West Indian had run it's career in Dublin, Mr. Dawson exhibited another stroke of generalship, which deserved to be remembered. Mr. Mossop for above two years past, had been preparing the town for the reception of his dramatic romance of Cymon, which at that

that time was very popular in London. The ſcenes were painted, the dreſſes made, and the moſt ſplendid decorations promiſed.

As the time approached for bringing it forward, each newſpaper was filled with paragraphs, and encomiums, on the excellence of the piece, the beauty of the muſic, and the capital manner in which it was to be exhibited. At length, the day was appointed for the performance of this long expected and much famed romance, which was to be on Friday March 8th.

On the Saturday night preceding this Friday, Mr. Dawſon, after the play was over at Capel-ſtreet theatre, ſtept forward and gave out for the Monday evening following, the celebrated dramatic romance of Cymon, with all the original muſic, and entire new ſcenery, machinery, dreſſes, and decorations, and a grand proceſſion of the knights of the different orders of chivalry.

The audience were aſtoniſhed, and his own performers could ſcarce credit their ſenſes. But he ſoon convinced them he was in earneſt, for ſo complete, ſecret, and maſterly were his

movements, that not a single article was wanting in the various requisites.

Without disclosing his design, he had got a most capital set of scenes painted, and had provided the different dresses, which were made by Lupino, tailor to the Opera House, London. The music he had got practiced, and the principal parts studied, under the pretence that, after their opponents had played it a few nights as a first piece, he then would bring it out as a farce. In short, a design so well concerted, and which required so much forethought and address, would have done honour to the first general of the age.

On the Monday evening following, March 4th, Cymon was exhibited at Capel-street theatre, with a correctness and brilliancy which were highly creditable. The scenery was beautiful, and well adapted; the dresses picturesque and according to the original models, and the procession remarkably splendid and nouvelle. All the performers, without exception, walked in different characters; and upwards of forty supernumeries filled up the train, in proper habits.

The

The representation of this charming romance, as might be expected, afforded infinite satisfaction, and when given out again, was sanctioned by reiterated plaudits.

This was a thunderstroke to the other party, who beheld the hope of their long expected harvest so suddenly blasted and destroyed. It was performed four nights before they were able to bring it out at Smock-alley, and even then, though it was got up with great care and attention, yet as first impressions are not easily erased, the public were prepossessed in favour of Capel-street, and though it was often played during the season, yet it never answered the expence, and was afterwards reduced to a farce.

In these contested pieces I judge that perhaps the reader may be interested more than in the common routine of business. I therefore generally subjoin the support each received, at their respective theatres.

In compliance with this rule, the following is the drama of Cymon, as then represented.

	Capel-ſtreet.	*Smock-Alley.*
Cymon,	Mr. Mahon,	Mr. Ryder,
Merlin,	Mr. Glenville,	Mr Heaphy,
Dorus,	Mr. Herbert,	Mr. Remington,
Cupid,		Miſs Rogers, 5 years old,
Linco,	Mr. O'Keefe,	Mr. Wilder,
Urganda,	Mrs. Barre,	Miſs Shewcraft,
Fatima,	Miſs Younge,	Miſs Manſell,
Dorcas,	Mrs. Hoſkins,	Mrs. Heaphy,
Sylvia,	Miſs Aſhmore,	Mrs. Browne.

The Romp, which has been already mentioned, was alſo about this time exhibited in Capel-ſtreet, in which Miſs Aſhmore acquired great and deſerved reputation. Theſe pieces, with Mr. Macklin's Love a la Mode, and Trueborn Scotchman, brought them through the remainder of the ſeaſon. The Weſt Indian run upwards of eighteen nights, Cymon nine, the Romp ſix or ſeven, the Trueborn Scotchman ſeven, and the ſucceſs which attended them

ſeemed

ſeemed to give the finiſhing ſtroke to Mr. Moſſop's management.

Diſappointed in his hopes, harraſſed by innumerable vexations, and oppreſſed with debts he had not the leaſt proſpect of being able to diſcharge, his ſpirits ſunk under the preſſure of ſuch accumulated misfortunes, and a ſevere illneſs prevented his appearing on the ſtage.

Thus unfortunately circumſtanced, he was obliged to ſolicit the generoſity of the public he had ſo many times delighted: and, in this diſtreſſed ſituation, announced a benefit for himſelf, in which he was unable to perform, and in his advertiſement "humbly hoped his indiſpoſition would not prevent the attendance of his friends."

The benefit was fixed for the 17th of April, 1771, when the comedy of Rule a Wife, was acted. The Copper Captain, Mr. Ryder; Leon, Mr. Heaphy; Margaritta, Miſs Manſell, and Eſtifania, Mrs. Brown, late Miſs Slack; with Cymon now reduced to an afterpiece.

Though

Though the houſe was very much crowded, yet the receipts afforded but a temporary relief. His affairs were ſo deſperate that it was next to an impoſſibility for any immediate efforts to retrieve them.

Much to the honour of the new managers, they would not attempt to oppreſs a fallen enemy, and therefore did not oppoſe the benefit, by playing on that night. The greatneſs of their ſucceſs enlarged their hopes, and Mr. Moſſop being obliged to relinquiſh Crow-ſtreet theatre, they took poſſeſſion, and removed thither in the month of March, whither the favour of the town attended them with unabating warmth. A few benefits were taken at Smock-alley by the moſt capital performers, and they cloſed early in May.

Proſperity did not make the new managers of Crow-ſtreet ſlacken their endeavours. On the contrary, the three kingdoms were explored for novelty. They brought over that very excellent comedian and facetious companion Mr. Iſaac Sparks, who after a five years abſence made his appearance in John Moody.

In

In May, Mr. and Mrs. Jackſon, from the theatre-royal Edinburgh, arrived. The public were already well acquainted with the merit of Mrs. Jackſon, late Miſs Browne, daughter of Mr. Sowdon. She had been abſent near five years, and appeared again, for the firſt time, in Polly, a character which her figure and voice peculiarly ſuited. Mr. Jackſon's debut was in Oroonoko. They were favourites with the town, and played a variety of parts with much reputation.

But the moſt acceptable preſent to the public was Mr. Barry, who now diveſted of his royal honours, though not of his powers to charm, once more moved in a private ſtation.

He was accompanied by Mrs. Dancer, now Mrs. Barry, who on the 13th of June, played Roſalind, a part ſhe was peculiarly happy in; Orlando by Mr. Lewis, Jaques by Mr. Sowdon who was of his party in this expedition.

A few

A few nights after, Mr. Barry appeared in Jaffier, when his return was welcomed with the moſt unfeigned applauſe.

The remainder of the ſeaſon was chiefly devoted to the tragic muſe; Mr. and Mrs. Barry repeated moſt of their favourite characters, as Othello and Deſdemona, Lear and Cordelia, Lord and Lady Townly, Rhadamiſtus and Zenobia, Alexander and Statira, Lord and Lady Saliſbury, Varanes and Athenais, Marc Anthony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, which cloſed the ſeaſon, Auguſt the third.

Early in June Miſs Young returned to England, highly pleaſed with her trip, in which ſhe acquired a great portion of the two great eſſentials of theatric life, fame and profit. So ſtrong and favourable an impreſſion did ſhe leave on the Iriſh audience, that time has never ſince obliterated it, and every viſit which ſhe afterwards made to this kingdom, ſerved to ſtrengthen a prepoſſeſſion founded on merit, and aided by private character.

A few

A few nights previous to the conclusion, Mr. Isaac Sparks introduced his son, Mr. Richard Sparks, to the public in the part of Lord Townly. His youth and figure pleased much, and a laudable partiality for the father made the town entertain hopes he would prove a valuable acquisition to the drama.

CHAP. XV.

Burletta's performed at Ranelagh Gardens.—Mr. Mossop's misfortunes.—Goes to London.—Is arrested there.—Another benefit for him at Smock-alley.—Theatres opens November 11th, 1771.—Mr. Lewis's rising fame.—Miss Ashmore's.—Success indifferent.—Mr. Whyte's young company.

AS soon as the theatre closed, a small party took possession of Ranelagh gardens, where they exhibited English Burletta's, two or three times a week for the remainder of the season.

This party consisted principally of Miss Ashmore, Miss Hawtry, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Glenville, and Mr. Atkins, The Ephesian Matron was one of their capital exhibitions.

The

The heavy hand of dire misfortune ſtill purſued, with unrelenting fury, the unhappy Mr. Moſſop. Recovered ſomewhat in his health, he embarked for England, and in London, endeavoured to procure reinforcements for the enſuing winter.

Hither his unrelenting creditors purſued him, and a Mr. Graham, one of his own performers, laid on the firſt arreſt for non-payment of ſalary due to him. This arreſt was ſpeedily followed by numbers of others, and he was confined in the King's Bench, without the leaſt proſpect of relief.

On every feeling mind his misfortunes made the deepeſt impreſſion. The public ſeemed much intereſted in his fate, and lamented that a man of ſuch genius ſhould be ſo involved, from a train of untoward circumſtances, in which his prudence could not fairly be impeached.

Another benefit for him in Smock-alley was fixed on by his friends, previous to the commencement of the ſeaſon, when an occaſional prologue was ſpoken by Mr. Ryder, who did every thing on the occaſion that friendſhip could

ſuggeſt,

ſuggeſt, or the nature of his ſituation would admit of.

The following advertiſement appeared, preparatory to the benefit.

"The friends of Mr. Moſſop make no doubt, that the lovers of the drama in particular, and the nobility and gentry of this kingdom in general, ever eminent for their encouragement of merit, will exert themſelves on the above occaſion, as Mr. Moſſop's caſe is peculiarly ſevere, having at great trouble and vaſt expence, during the ſummer, made very conſiderable theatrical engagements in England for the entertainment of this city, when, on the very eve of his return to this kingdom, to reap the harveſt of his labours, he met with the hard hand of oppreſſion, and that chiefly from people of his own profeſſion."

The play was the Orphan, and never was there a more crowded houſe. The amount however, was ſtill inadequate to the end propoſed, and, as there was a great overflow, the play was repeated two nights after, with this addition to the bills, "'tis humbly hoped the nobility and

gentry

gentry will ſtill exert themſelves, and bring to his native country, one of the beſt theatrical performers now living."

But ineffectual were theſe well-meant efforts of his friends. His native country never beheld him more! So great and various were his debts, that after a ſevere confinement, he was at laſt obliged to take the benefit of an act of bankruptcy, before he could regain his liberty.

Amidſt theſe diſcouraging circumſtances, Smock-alley theatre ſtill kept open, though with the utmoſt difficulty. Mr. Ryder had now an Herculean weight upon his ſhoulders. A ſinking theatre almoſt up-held, it might be ſaid, by the ſingle ſtrength of his abilities.

It is true Mr. and Mrs. Jackſon in this exigence were of the higheſt ſervice to the cauſe, eſpecially in tragedy. They performed Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Deſdemona, Tancred and Sigiſmunda, and a variety of other characters.

Mrs. Ryder alſo came forward at this period, and played ſeveral parts, as Clementina, Conſtance in King John, Lady Macbeth, &c.

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The induſtry of Mr. Dawſon, and his co-partners, ſtill ſeemed to keep pace with their ſucceſs. Though detained by various matters till it was late, he in October ſet off for London, after having given the neceſſary directions for repairing and new decorating the Crow-ſtreet theatre.

The principal object of his journey was to cloſe an engagement with Mr. Macklin, with whom he had always lived on terms of ſtrict friendſhip.

The theatre opened on the 11th of November, 1771, with the Provoked Huſband, and Devil to Pay. Lord Townly, Mr. Sparks jun.; Manly, Mr. Heaphy; Count Baſſett, Mr. Mahon; Squire Richard, Mr. O'Keefe; Sir Francis Wronghead, Mr. Macklin; Miſs Jenny, Miſs Aſhmore; Lady Grace, Miſs Hearne; Lady Wronghead, Mrs. Heaphy, and Lady Townly, Mrs. Lee, late Mrs. Jefferies of Drury-lane, her firſt appearance; with the Jobſon of Mr. Sparks, and Nell of Miſs Aſhmore.

Mr.

Mr. Sheridan was alſo engaged for ſix nights, and played his Cato, Hamlet, Richard, Lear, &c. Much about this time, Mr. Vandermere, a comedian of great merit, made his firſt appearance on the Crow-ſtreet ſtage, in Lord Ogleby, a character he ſuſtained with much propriety, and for many years after continued a great and deſerving favourite with the town.

It would be injuſtice, were I not in this place to notice the riſing fame, popularity, and ſuperior abilities of Mr. Lewis, who though ſo very young, gave every promiſe of attaining that dramatic excellence he has ſince ſo uniformly diſplayed. At this time he ſupported a very extenſive and varied line of buſineſs in tragedy and comedy with great ability.

Miſs Aſhmore was alſo at this period a peculiar favourite with the public. Each day added to her reputation. Had ſhe accepted of ſeveral offers made her from the London theatre, at that time, there is every probability that, in ſo correct and improving a ſchool, ſhe might have been claſſed amongſt the firſt actreſſes on the Britiſh ſtage.

In

In the following ſpring ſhe married Mr. Richard Sparks, ſon of the celebrated comedian of that name.

With ſo excellent a company, it ſhould ſeem an eaſy taſk to preſerve the popularity they had already gained; and yet, ſo little to be depended upon is public favour, notwithſtanding every exertion and attention, the audiences began to decline, and the receipts of the theatre experienced a viſible decreaſe.

As merit is not confined to thoſe of mature years, it is but juſtice to mention a minor company of actors, who at this time attracted the notice of the town.

Theſe were a number of young gentlemen, belonging to Mr. Whyte's grammar ſchool in Grafton-ſtreet, a gentleman to whom the public are highly indebted, for his judicious mode of educating youth, and whoſe numerous pupils have ſince ornamented every liberal, and exalted ſtation in life.

Under the tuition of ſo excellent a preceptor, the young gentlemen above mentioned, exhibited

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the tragedy of Cato, during the Christmas recess, at the little theatre in Capel-street, with a propriety and strength of genius, that would have reflected credit on the first actors on the stage.

So uncommonly indeed, did those junior performers distinguish themselves, that, at the request of a great number of the nobility and gentry who were present, they repeated Cato a few nights after, for the relief of the confined debtors in the several marshalseas: the Marquis of Kildare, the Earl of Bellamont, and Lord Dunluce, condescending to act as trustees on this occasion.

Before I quit the present subject, justice obliges me to remark, that many are the obligations which the community at large owe to the labours of Mr. Whyte.

Intimately connected with Mr. Sheridan, thoroughly acquainted with his principles and mode of communicating his ideas on the advancement and perfection of the English tongue, he commenced teacher, and since that time has, I believe, contributed more towards understanding

ing, the various beauties, and critically reading, writing, and ſpeaking the language, than any other profeſſional gentleman in the kingdom.

Poſſeſſed of claſſical knowledge, and refined taſte, the youth committed to his care amply reaped from his inſtruction, every advantage which eminent abilities, and judicious obſervation give, and he has the honour of ſaying, that many of the beſt orators in our ſenate, and greateſt ornaments of the pulpit and bar, have received the early part of their education under his government.

CHAP

CHAP. XVI.

Mossop's misfortunes continue, another benefit for him at Smock-alley.—Declining state of the stage.—Mr. Cumberland's comedy of the Brothers, at both theatres.—The Grecian Daughter at both houses.—Mr. Wilkinson once more visits Ireland, his reception.—Mr. Macklin returns to England with Miss Leeson.

THE heavy pressure of adversity, still with increasing rigour, pursued the ill-fated Mr. Mossop.

On the 28th of January, 1772, we find the following interesting intelligence respecting him in a London paper.

"On

"On Saturday se'nnight, Mr. Mossop appeared "before the commissioners of bankrupts at Guild-"hall, being the third meeting, when he passed "his examination and delivered up his effects, "which were about 130*l.* in cash, a 40*l.* and "a 10*l.* bill, his gold watch, &c. when the "creditors humanely gave him back the bills, "Gold watch, &c. Mr. Garrick attended and "proved a debt of about 200*l.* We are in-"formed that Mr. Mossop will soon make his "appearance at Drury-lane theatre, in the cha-"racter of Pierre."

The latter part of the paragraph never took place. Various and insurmountable difficulties prevented his ever again displaying to the public, those abilities that merited a better fate.

Mean time his numerous friends in this kingdom, were far from deserting his cause. Application was once more made to the public for another benefit. Mrs. Fitzhenry kindly offered her services on the occasion, and played Zaphira in Barbarossa, March the 23d.

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The emoluments arising from this benefit, though considerable, proved a temporary relief, but were by no means adequate to the humane end proposed, and he still was condemned to struggle with the rude gripe of adversity.

The public now were, with much reason, heartily tired of the unceasing contentions excited by the different parties, which produced no one good effect, and of whose encreasing evils they saw no end: many therefore of the most dispassionate and unprejudiced united in the idea of applying to parliament for establishing one theatre only. A committee was formed, and instructions given for preparing a petition, and an advertisement was published, inviting all such as were desirous of co-operating in so useful and salutary a scheme to meet at Bardin's hotel, College-green.

Mr. Sheridan also in a pamphlet published at that time, which contained the purport of a speech delivered to a number of auditors at the Music-hall in Fishamble-street, in a most judicious and masterly manner, evinced the necessity of adopting such a measure, as the only means of

restoring

restoring the stage to a proper degree of credit and respectability. The meeting, however, was attended with very little effect; a contrariety of opinions which could not be reconciled, prevented the embracing so salutary a scheme.

The established reputation which Mr. Cumberland's West Indian had obtained, rendered his next comedy of the Brothers, a desirable object for both parties, and another scene of rivalship was again acted over by the contending powers. Each strove to bring it out first, but on this occasion, Smock-alley produced it one day before Crow-street.

As it did not possess the intrinsic merit of the former, so also was it's success proportionably inferior: it was played ten or twelve nights at each, without any reason for either to boast of it's reception, or attraction. Every exertion seems, at this time, to have been made by both managers with very little effect. New and revived pieces, pantomimes in every shape and form, and all the various sources of dramatic entertainment were explored and exhausted to little purpose. Novelty had lost it's charms, variety it's power; even the Russian dogs in a panto-

mime

mime, and the Elephant introduced at Smock-alley in the coronation in Henry the 8th, on which "the champion made his public entry in armour of burnished gold," could not draw.

At this unfavourable period was Mr. Murphy's tragedy of the Grecian Daughter, then in the very zenith of its reputation, introduced on the Irish stage. The uncommon success which attended it's exhibition in London, had fully established it's character in the dramatic world, and excited an earnest desire in the public to behold a piece, of which fame spoke so highly.

According to custom, it was announced at both theatres, long before there was any possibility of bringing it forward; it was advertised even to the morning of the very day on which it was to have been performed at Crow-street for the benefit of Mr. Sparks, jun. when in the evening there was an apology made, of the sudden illness of Mrs. Sparks, late Miss Ashmore, who was to have played Euphrasia. The play was consequently deferred.

The next attempt was at Smock-alley, when after several delays it was first performed, May 14th,

14th, for the benefit of Mrs. Ryder, who was the original Grecian Daughter in this kingdom. In about a fortnight after, Mr. Dawſon produced it for his benefit when Mrs. Sparks gave an impreſſion of this popular heroine, with great truth of colouring and genuine touches of nature.

Brought out under ſuch diſadvantages, and ſo far advanced in the ſeaſon, it could not be expected to do much. Hereafter with Mr. Barry and Mrs. Dancer, we ſhall find it drawing large ſums to the theatrical treaſury.

Much about this time, Mr. Wilkinſon, always attached to this kingdom, which upon every occaſion he celebrates for it's hoſpitality, and fond of a theatric excurſion, quitted for a ſhort ſpace, his regal domains of York and Hull, once more to viſit Dublin. Inclination led him to ſupport the intereſts of Crow-ſtreet, induced perhaps by Mr. Dawſon, who ſome time before in a tour through England, had ſpent a few days at York, and probably laid the foundation of the preſent engagement.

Captain

Captain Ironſides in the Brothers, and Major Sturgeon in the Mayor of Garrett, both good copies of the originals, were the characters in which he choſe to renew his acquaintance with the Iriſh audience, who received him with that cordiality and warmth his merit deſerved.

The very unpleaſant ſituation of the ſtage at this time, rendered Mr. Wilkinſon's ſtay very ſhort in Dublin. He remained about a month, during which he played Colonel Oldboy, The Upholſterer, Lord Ogleby, Shift, Smirk, and Mrs. Cole in the Minor, Cadwallader in the Author, the Commiſſary, his tragedy A-la-Mode, Colin Mc. Cleod in the Faſhionable Lover, and a few other of his favourites.

The remaining occurrences of the ſeaſon were but few. Mr. Macklin finiſhed his engagement with Sir Paul Plyant and Love a-la-Mode, and returned to London, taking with him his pupil, Miſs Leeſon, a young lady whom he firſt introduced on the ſtage at Crow-ſtreet theatre, early the preceding winter in Lady Townly, with much expectation, and who afterwards appeared not only in all his pieces, but ſeveral other principal parts in comedy with ſucceſs.

This lady who ſeveral times ſince has viſited Ireland, is at preſent Mrs. Lewis of Covent-garden theatre, whoſe many virtues, and amiable private character, have juſtly endeared her to a numerous and reſpectable circle of valuable friends.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Dramatic revolution.—Mr. Ryder commences Manager of Smock-alley.—His motives—Opens with the Kind Impoſtor, and Virgin unmaſked.—Liſt of his company.—Mr. and Mrs. Jackſon, Mr. T. Jackſon, Mr. Parker, Mr. Cartwright join him.—Mr. Dawſon's exertions.—Announces Mr. Macklin and Miſs Leeſon, Mr. and Mrs. King from York—Mr. Wilks at Smock-alley.—Lionel and the Iriſh Widow, every Wedneſday.—New pieces—She Stoop's to Conquer.—Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth's appearance.—He opens a theatre in Drogheda—Relinquiſhes the ſtage.—Lord Lieutenant viſits Smock-alley.—Catley performs there.—Mr. and Mrs. Barry, and Mr. Aickin from Drury-lane.

TOWARDS the cloſe of the laſt campaign, a variety of circumſtances indicated another theatric revolution, which the ſummer receſs forwarded, and brought to a concluſion. On the ruins of the preſent dramatic ſtate of Smock-alley,

a new empire arose that flourished for several years, and in the beginning promised a permanency which it never attained. Mr. Ryder had long been justly considered as the animating spirit that gave life and motion to the theatre he upheld; it needed therefore, but little preparation to dissolve the old government, now too feeble to act with vigour, and form a new community, which by having so favourite an actor for their manager, gave every reasonable hope of success.

Spurred on by ambition, unappalled by the numerous train of evils which had been recently experienced, and which are in some measure, the general attendants on dramatic dominion, and not in the least intimidated by the perils by which his predecessors perished, Mr. Ryder assumed the reins of theatric power at Smock-alley, and made every necessary arrangment his judgment and prudence could dictate.

It must be confessed, the times held forth many alluring inducements to Mr. Ryder to undertake so arduous and difficult a task, as that of directing an Irish theatre. The reduced, distrest situation of the stage at Smock-alley, which could

could not be ſupported under its preſent difficulties; his being in the prime of life, conſcious of being capable of ſuſtaining by the ſtrength of his own abilities, a varied and extenſive line of buſineſs; a great favourite with the public, by whom he was urged to the preſent undertaking; a tolerable knowledge of the theatric world, which his late practice in that capacity in the country had improved and extended; theſe motives were more than ſufficient to excite in him an ardent deſire to commence manager. Hope pictured to his warm imagination, a long ſucceſſion of viſionary bliſs, which he ſeldom taſted, and enjoyments which fall to the lot of few managers.

The ſummer vacation afforded excellent time for preparation. The theatre underwent a thorough repair, and received every embelliſhment it could admit of: a tolerable wardrobe was provided, a compact company ſelected, light and not expenſive; capable of going through a good deal of buſineſs, and which received a powerful acceſſion in Mrs. Sparks, who then ſtood very high in public opinion, and who was prevailed on to quit the adverſe party.

Every

Every thing being in readineſs, as far as circumſtances would admit, Mr. Ryder took the lead long before his opponent could draw his forces together, and opened ſo early as Monday September, 1772, with an occaſional prologue, after which was performed the ſame comedy that Meſſrs. Barry and Woodward opened with

SHE WOULD AND SHE WOULD NOT,

OR,

THE KIND IMPOSTOR.

Trappanti	-	Mr. Ryder, his firſt appearance in that character.
Don Philip	-	Mr. Sparks, jun.
Octavio	-	Mr. Wilmot,
And Don Manuel	-	Mr. Jſaac Sparks,
Flora	-	Mrs. Durravan,
Roſara	-	Mrs. Barry,
Viletta	-	Mrs. Brown,
And Hypolita	-	Mrs. Sparks, jun. being her firſt appearance in that character.

To which will be added,

THE VIRGIN UNMASKED.

Coupee

Coupee	-	Mr. Ryder,
Bliſter	-	Mr. Iſaac Sparks,
Quaver	-	Mr. Wilmot,
And Miſs Lucy	-	Mrs. Sparks.

" ☞ The public may depend that the curtain will riſe at half paſt ſix preciſely.

" N. B. The houſe is fitted up and repaired in the moſt elegant manner, and will be lighted with wax, and as Mr. Ryder has been at the expence of covering the benches of the pit with green cloth, he humbly hopes no perſon will ſtand on them. Ladies will be admitted into the pit as in the London theatres.

" The ſcenery and decorations are entirely new, painted by Meſſrs. Jolly and Bamford."

From the above ſtatement it may be ſeen, that the firſt night promiſed but little; yet novelty, and that generoſity which generally actuates the public mind on thoſe occaſions, rendered the performance highly acceptable; great hopes were entertained of ſucceſs, which were afterwards

wards amply verified, and a ſucceſſion of crowded houſes, gave a ſtrength and ſtability to the new undertaking which were of the utmoſt ſervice.

The following liſt will convey ſome idea of Smock-alley company at the time of opening.

Mr. Ryder,	Mr. Kane,
Mr. Iſaac Sparks,	Mr. Maher,
Mr. Sparks, jun.	Mr. Hallion,
Mr. Wilder,	Mr. Brown,
Mr. Dodd,	Mr. Read,
Mr. Wilmot,	Mr. Duffy,
Mr. Waker,	Mr. Neill,
Mr. Durravan,	Mr. Garland,
Mr. Owens,	Mr. Logan.
Mr. Stewart,	
Mrs. Sparks,	Mrs. Hoſkins,
Mrs. Brown,	Mrs. Barry, &c.

To theſe were ſhortly after added Mr. and Mrs. Jackſon, Mr. T. Jackſon a comedian of ſome merit from Bath, Mr. Parker from Edinburgh, who made his firſt appearance in Ben, in Love for Love, and Major Sturgeon; Mr. Cart-

wright

wright on the muſical glaſſes, and ſeveral others whom Mr. Ryder had engaged to join his ſtandard.

For upwards of ſix weeks, Mr. Ryder had the town entirely to himſelf, an opportunity which he improved to the utmoſt. During this time Mr. Dawſon was far from remaining an idle ſpectator. He foreſaw the impending ſtorm, and though he was not able to avert its fall, yet he uſed his utmoſt endeavour to divert and break its force. Notwithſtanding every effort, ſuch were the difficulties he had to encounter, that he found it impoſſible to open Crow-ſtreet theatre before Monday, November 9th, when the Weſt Indian and Midas were performed with not the moſt pleaſing proſpect of ſucceſs.

However, what could be accompliſhed in ſuch a ſituation, he did. An engagement with Mr. Macklin and Miſs Leeſon was announced, and early in the ſeaſon he brought forward Mr. and Mrs. King, from the theatre-royal York, where they had reſided ſeveral years, much eſteemed, and great favourites. Fame had ſpoke highly of Mrs. King's theatric abilities. In the York circuit ſhe was eſteemed equal to

any actreſs on the ſtage, and from this extraordinary and general character, Mr. Dawſon conceived, that in his preſent exigence, he had made a very valuable acquiſition.

Mrs. King certainly poſſeſſed many requiſites for the ſtage. Nature had beſtowed on her a tall, commanding, elegant figure, with a face capable of exhibiting every diſcrimination of the various paſſions of the drama; to theſe ſhe added all the poliſhed grace of action which a mind well informed could ſuggeſt. Her voice and manner were in a great meaſure accordant to her figure, ſtrong and forcible, but devoid of thoſe delicate touches of nature, which Mrs. Barry had accuſtomed the Iriſh audience to.

Her choice of a character was judicious; Euphraſia in the Grecian Daughter, afforded her various opportunities of diſplaying her figure and powers to advantage. From her great reputation, much was expected; and though ſhe did not entirely anſwer that expectation, yet ſhe proved a moſt valuable ſupport both in tragedy and comedy to the cauſe ſhe eſpouſed, during the remainder of the ſeaſon. Mandane, Roſa-

lind,

lind, Lady Townly, Viola, Sir Harry Wildair, Beatrice, &c. were amongſt the many characters ſhe performed.

Mr. King's abilities, which were much more confined, lay chiefly in the line in which Mr. Lewis was ſo far ſuperior, that few opportunities occurred of his performing. The enſuing ſummer they compoſed part of Mr. Heaphy's company at Cork, after which they returned to York, where Mr. Wilkinſon received them with much pleaſure. For ſeveral years paſt they have been ſettled off the ſtage at Lynn, in Norfolk, with much credit and reſpectability.

Mr. Macklin and Miſs Leeſon, followed Mrs. King, but though in great eſtimation with the town, yet was their attraction over, and, as is often the caſe in theatrical affairs, merit was obliged to give place to novelty; however, the arrival of the new lord lieutenant, the Earl of Harcourt, inſpired them with freſh hopes, which in ſome meaſure were gratified. At the commencement of his vice regency, he uſed every means to render himſelf popular, and amongſt others, did not neglect that, of courting it at the theatre, which he viſited once a week for ſome time.

But

But to return to Mr. Ryder, the tide of ſucceſs which continued to follow him with unabated force from his opening the theatre, received an increaſe from the return of Mr. Wilks the original Jeſſamy, who, after an abſence of three years came forward once more in his favourite character, and gave new faſhion to this popular opera.

Shortly after, the Iriſh Widow, then performing in London with much applauſe, was produced at both theatres on the ſame night, but with far different ſucceſs. Mrs. Sparks gave ſuch a captivating, elegant, finiſhed portrait of the Widow Brady, as charmed the public, bore down all oppoſition, and added much to her riſing fame; at Crow-ſtreet it was only performed a few nights, at Smock-alley it was regularly preſented every Wedneſday, for upwards of eighteen weeks to crowded houſes.

In this conteſt, tragedy had its ſhare of public attention at Smock-alley, where it was reſpectably ſupported by Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Jackſon, Mr. Ryder, (the moſt general actor in tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce, living) Mrs. Fitzhenry, Mrs. Jackſon, and Mrs. Sparks.

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The favours he enjoyed, ſeemed to quicken Mr. Ryder's exertions, and ſuch a number of new and revived pieces were brought forward in rapid ſucceſſion, as evinced his activity and induſtry.

A new comic opera called the Mileſian, written by a Mr. Mc. Dermot, formerly a breeches-maker; (Jones was a bricklayer) but at preſent, ſurveyor of Dunleary, was at this time produced, but though it was well acted, yet partly from the author's being unpopular, it was obliged to be laid aſide after the fourth or fifth night.

A new comedy called the South Briton, ſaid to be the production of a lady, followed, but was not much more favourably received.

Very late in the ſeaſon, the latter end of April, Dr. Goldſmith's comedy of She Stoops to Conquer, was brought out at both theatres; at Crow-ſtreet on a Monday, and at Smock-alley the following evening, but with no great ſucceſs at either.

At this period a gentleman made his firſt eſſay on the ſtage at Smock-alley, who deſerves

to

to be particularly remembered. This was no other than Mr. Pratt, then known by the name of Courtney Melmoth, whose literary fame, and various excellent writings will be remembered as long as a friend to humanity remains. The part he chose for his appearance was Marc Anthony in All for Love, preceded by a prologue of his writing, spoken by Mr. Ryder, preparatory to his reception, which was as flattering as he could wish.

In a few nights after he repeated Marc Antony, and in the remaining part of the season, played Publius Horatius in the Roman Father, Lusignan in Zara, Lord Salisbury, Jaffier, and a few other characters. His success on the stage, though by no means equal to that in the republic of letters, yet was respectable. His figure was tall and genteel, his deportment easy, from his education and knowledge he could not but be a sensible speaker; yet he wanted powers and force.

At his benefit, which was the Orphan, in which he played Castalio, he introduced Mrs. Melmoth, then in the bloom of life, a beautiful figure, with a remarkably sweet voice, to public

notice

notice in Monimia, a part in which ſhe ſucceeded ſo well, as to give every hope ſhe would prove a valuable acquiſition to the ſtage. Nor was the public judgment diſappointed. Mrs. Melmoth's abilities are capable of commanding a reſpectable ſituation in any theatre.

When the ſeaſon cloſed Mr. Melmoth led a company to Drogheda, where he built a theatre capable of containing about forty pounds when much crowded; it was opened with the Merchant of Venice, in which he played Shylock, and Mrs. Melmoth, Portia. After an unſucceſsful campaign of upwards of three months, he was obliged to relinquiſh management, and with it all idea of the ſtage. This done he reſumed avocations more ſuitable to his genius, and from time to time produced a variety of pieces that did honour to his head and heart.

To fill up the meaſure of ſucceſs which marked this ſeaſon, we find, what appears remarkably ſingular. That though Crow-ſtreet was the theatre-royal, and conſequently entitled to every mark of vice-regal favour, yet the lord lieutenant ſeveral times honoured it's opponent with his preſence, particularly to Mr.

Ryder's

Ryder's Sir John Reſtleſs, Mrs. Sparks's Iriſh Widow, and Mr. Sheridan's Hamlet.

In the month of May, Miſs Catley, who had been abſent three years, returned to Smock-alley, with, if poſſible, encreaſed attraction, and with "her native wood notes wild," once more charmed an admiring public. She played Roſetta three times, Polly once, then took a benefit, and finiſhed with Ephroſine in Comus.

This very long and ſucceſsful campaign at Smock-alley, cloſed with an eclat equal to its commencement. Mr. and Mrs. Barry, in company with Mr. Francis Aickin from Drury-lane, viſited Dublin in the month of June.

Owing to ſome diſpute with Mr. Dawſon, who was ſtill in poſſeſſion of the theatre-royal, and who according to every information, was unfairly, or rather cruelly treated in the matter, they performed a few nights at Mr. Ryder's theatre: but upon Mr. Dawſon's relinquiſhing Crow-ſtreet, they removed thither, where they finiſhed the ſeaſon about the latter end of July, with much advantage to themſelves and emolument to the manager.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Mr. Lewis engages at Covent-Garden.—Mr. Ryder opens without oppoſition.—She Stoops to Conquer, Lionel, and Iriſh Widow every week. —Mr. and Mrs. Miel, Mrs. Pinto appear at Smock-alley.—The comedy of the Macaroni performed.—Mr. Foote, Mrs. Jewell, Mrs. Williams, Mr. Fleetwood, Mr. Sheridan, Mrs. Fitzhenry, at Smock-alley.—Mr. Dawſon's operations.—Opens Capel-ſtreet theatre.—Liſt of the company.—Mr. and Mrs. Simpſon.—Mr. Robinſon.---The Jubille at Capel-ſtreet.---School for Wives at both houſes.---Deſertion of Mr. Dawſon's forces.---Conſequent cloſe of his ſeaſon.

BEFORE the commencement of the next ſeaſon, the Iriſh ſtage was deprived of one of its greateſt ornaments; Mr. Lewis, whoſe attachment to Mr. Dawſon had hitherto prevented his looking forward to that ſituation which his merit

merit ſo highly entitled him to, finding at length, that he was not likely to profit any longer by his aſſiſtance, liſtened to propoſals, and accepted of terms from Covent-garden, where he made his firſt appearance in the character of Belcour, in the Weſt Indian, on Monday, October 15th, 1773.

His ſucceſs may be eſtimated by the honourable rank he has ſince ſuſtained in the drama, which certainly places him amongſt the firſt and moſt finiſhed comedians of the age. The following critique on his performance that night which appeared the next day in one of the London papers, is written with ſo judicious and diſcriminating a taſte, as to render it worthy of inſertion. It was as follows:

"Laſt night was performed, at the theatre-royal, Covent-garden, the comedy of the Weſt Indian, Belcour by Mr. Lewis from Dublin, being his firſt appearance on this ſtage."

"On his firſt entrance, the agreeableneſs of his figure, and the vivacity of his manner, obtained for him that applauſe, which an Engliſh audience is ever ready to beſtow on the efforts of genius.

genius. Animated, therefore, by this reception, it took off in a great meaſure, that embarraſſment which too generally clogs the powers of firſt appearances, and left us more at liberty to examine his pretenſions to public favour."

"His perſon we may pronounce to be a good ſtage figure, rather above the middle ſize, his voice clear, articulate, and commanding, his deportment graceful and eaſy. As the part of Belcour demands great vivacity and ſpirit, Mr. Lewis filled the whole of it with propriety; judiciouſly ſteering between the pertneſs of the coxcomb, and the dapper manners of low comedy; ſo that on the whole, we may venture to congratulate the town upon the acquiſition of an actor, who ſeems to be ſo able a ſucceſſor to Mr. O'Brien in the walk of genteel comedy."

I ſhall for the preſent, take my leave of this gentleman with the following obſervation. That as excellence of private character cannot be any diſadvantage to eminence in public, ſo does Mr. Lewis enjoy, as much as moſt men living, the happineſs that ariſes from being univerſally eſteemed; and ſuch has been the peculiar recti-

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tude of his conduct, that he has for years filled one of the moſt difficult ſtations in life to ſupport with credit, and has conducted himſelf with ſo much good ſenſe and propriety, as to defy malice to point out a blemiſh.

To return to my ſubject—Mr. Ryder's proſpects at this time, it muſt be confeſſed, were brilliant, and ſuch as might juſtify the moſt ſanguine expectations. The ill ſucceſs of his competitor and his being, though unjuſtly, deprived of Crow-ſtreet theatre, rendered him, at leaſt in Mr. Ryder's opinion, no very formidable rival. Accordingly, after a few neceſſary arrangements, he opened Smock-alley theatre on the 27th of September, with She Stoops to Conquer, and the Miller of Mansfield.

The favour of the town, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed his former ſeaſon, he continued to enjoy with undiminiſhed force, and the foſtering hand of public patronage liberally rewarded his endeavours. She Stoops to Conquer, which amongſt the benefits of laſt year, had not a fair chance, was brought out with great care, pleaſed much, and was generally played once a week; Lionel and the Iriſh Widow continued ſtill to

maintain

maintain their fashion, and were played together every Wednesday for some time.

Early in the season, Mr. and Mrs. Miel from the theatre-royal Norwich, made their first appearance in this kingdom the one in Archer in the Stratagem, the other in Diana in Lionel, and both with a tolerable share of success. The abilities of the former in light comedy parts, sprightly gentlemen, and pert valets were far above medio- Since that, the public have had many opportunities of seeing him support a respectable line of business at different times.

For some years past, he has been manager of an excellent company, who yearly visit Shrewsbury, Gloucester, Wolverhampton, &c.

Mrs. Miel, possessed an excellent full toned, powerful voice, without much cultivation, but capable of much improvement.

Artaxerxes was revived at this time, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Pinto, late Miss Brent, who had been absent eleven years, in Mandane. Her husband Mr. Pinto, led the band. Yet notwithstanding her former high cha-

character

racter in the muſical world, at preſent ſhe was but little followed, and performed but ſeldom during the ſeaſon.

The Comedy of the Macaroni, which I had written at York, in the Summer of 1772, when I had very little knowledge of the drama, but which from it's at that time popular title, and a few other happy circumſtances, met with remarkable ſucceſs in moſt of the provincial theatres in England, was at this time brought forward and performed a few nights. Whether from its want of merit or name, (never having been played in London) or perhaps from both combined, it was ſoon laid aſide to make room for more popular and deſerving pieces.

Mr. Ryder having concluded a treaty with Mr. Foote, this exotic arrived in November with Mrs. Jewell then his principal actreſs, and in high reputation, and a Mrs. Williams. This acceſſion of force did not much increaſe the receipts of the theatrical treaſury. They opened in the Maid of Bath, which never had been acted in this kingdom: it was repeated, but with no great effect. Mr. Foote afterwards went through his uſual routine of characters, but ſtill

under

under par. His benefit, The Bankrupt, was however a good one.

The latter end of November, Mr. Fletewood, from the Haymarket theatre, made his appearance in Tancred. This Gentleman was of a good family and connections. He had been ſome years an officer in the army, where having diſſipated a ſmall fortune, he embraced the ſtage as a pleaſing and certain reſource; nor was he deceived in his expectations. He poſſeſſed abilities which had he lived to cultivate, would have ornamented the drama.

During the ſeaſon, he played a variety of characters, principally in tragedy, with encreaſing reputation. On his quitting Smock-alley theatre, he engaged at Liverpool, where he ſpent the next winter. From thence he repaired to York, where he experienced much kindneſs from Mr. Wilkinſon and the public. Here his health began to decline, and he died about two years after at Leeds, eſteemed and regretted.

Mr. Sheridan and Mrs. Fitzhenry, who had renewed their engagements with Mr. Ryder, were purpoſely kept as a corps de reſerve, 'till the

the enemy, who began to rally from all quarters, and collect to one point, began to grow formidable, and make their approaches to dispute once more the dramatic crown with the present possessor.

Though I have not had an opportunity till the present, of mentioning Mr. Dawson's operations for some time past, yet he was far from remaining inactive, during Mr. Ryder's rapid advances. His usual fertility of genius and industry, employed each hour in making every disposition which the nature of his circumstances would admit.

Counteracted in his views respecting the theatre-royal, he once more had recourse to his fortunate theatre Capel-street, which on a former occasion had proved of such uncommon service. This point settled, he instantly set about repairing, painting and decorating it with the utmost diligence.

His company he had collected with every possible care, and though they were not so numerous, nor so high in general estimation, yet were there many of approved merit and respectability.

tability. Several had deſerted in the interim, and in return, ſeveral had been gained from the oppoſite party.

From a variety of untoward incidents, Mr. Dawſon found it impoſſible to open before Monday, the 23d of November, when the Weſt Indian was performed in the following manner.

By his Majeſties Servants,

At the new THEATRE in CAPEL-STREET.

This preſent Evening, the 22d Inſtant, November, will be acted a Comedy, called,

THE WEST INDIAN.

Belcour, the Weſt Indian, Mr. Kennedy,
From the Theatre-royal in Richmond, being his firſt appearance on this ſtage.

Stockwell	-	Mr. Mitchell,
Captain Dudley	-	Mr. Hollocombe,
Enſign Dudley	-	Mr. Leighton,

Being his firſt appearance on this ſtage.

Varland	-	Mr. Gaudrey,
Fulmer	-	Mr. Stewart,
Stukely	-	Mr. Richards,
Major Dennis O'Flaherty		Mr. Dawſon,

Charlotte Rusport - Mrs. Brown,
Her first appearance in this city these three years.
Lady Rusport - Mrs. Gray,
Mrs. Fulmer - Mrs. Maxwell,
Louisa Dudley - Mrs. Barry.

A new occasional prologue written by a gentleman of this city, to be spoken by Mr. Owens.

End of act 2d, a Solo Concerto on the German Flute, by Mynheer Schertie,

With a Farce, called,

FONDLEWIFE and LETITIA,

Altered from the OLD BATCHELOR, by Mr. SHERIDAN.

Fondlewife - Mr. Mitchell,
Belmour - Mr. Hallion,
Vainlove - Mr. Hilliar,
Wittol - Mr. Gaudrey,
Barnaby - Mr. Hollocombe,
Letitia - Mrs. Brown.

The house will be illuminated with wax.

N. B

N. B Half price to be taken after the third act, according to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom of the theatres in London.

Mr. Dawſon had many friends, who on this emergency, diſplayed their attachment. The houſe was crowded, and the entertainments went off with much applauſe; though the proſpect of the firſt night could not warrant his entertaining any great expectation of ſuccess, yet ſtill, hope did not deſert him. Every exertion poſſible he uſed, to gain an equal ſhare of public favour, and adopted the principle of Portius in Cato.

"'Tis not in mortals to command ſuccess,
But we'll do more; deſerve it."

To form a judgment how far the new eſtabliſhed company was entitled to the patronage of the town it is neceſſary that I ſhould ſubjoin a liſt of the greater part of the performers who compoſed it at the commencement of the ſeaſon.

Capel-Street Company, November 1773.

Mr. Dawson,	Mr. Hallion,
Mr. Dawson, jun.	Mr. Hollocombe,
Mr. Jackson,	Mr. Leighton,
Mr. Duchs,	Mr. Barrett,
Mr. Kennedy,	Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Mitchell,	Mr. Tyrer,
Mr. Lestrange,	Mr. Gaudrey,
Mr. Durravan,	Mr. Richards,
Mr. Durravan, jun.	Mr. O'Neill, &c.
Mr. Tyrrell,	

Mrs. Jackson,	Mrs. Durravan,
Mrs. Dawson,	Miss Ashmore,
Mrs. Barry,	Mrs. Barrett,
Mrs. Brown,	Mrs. Maxwell,
Miss Danby,	Mrs. Smith, &c.
Mrs. Grey,	

Shortly after, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson from the Norwich theatre, made their entrè on the Capel-street stage, in Sir John Melvil and Fanny Sterling in the Clandestine Marriage. Their arrival was seasonable, as Mr. Dawson wanted numbers, and the lady was capable of supporting a very

a very extensive line of business in tragedy, comedy, opera, and farce.

Mr. Simpson was brother to Mrs. Inchbald, at present so celebrated in the literary world. He was very young, tall and genteel, with a good face, but not much accustomed to the stage, or likely to make any great progress in a profession which requires uncommon endowments, and which his own good sense long since pointed out the propriety of quitting. Mrs. Simpson, formerly Miss George, was on the contrary, a most valuable acquisition; with a delicate elegant figure, (but rather under the size essential for a large stage) and a beautiful expressive countenance, she possessed abilities, which have since commanded the first situation in every theatre she has been in. Towards the end of the season, they accepted of an invitation from Mr. Ryder, with whom they remained some time.

Amongst the number of new faces produced at Capel-street, a Mr. Robinson deserves to be remembered. This gentleman, a native of Dublin, enamoured of the drama, commenced his career in Mungo, in which he acquitted himself with such eclat, as to confirm him in the resolution

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he had taken. In the course of a few years that he remained on the stage, I had opportunities of seeing him at York, and at Bristol, a very valuable and respectable member of each community. Since then, he has thought proper to resume the line of life he was originally designed for, the law, and he now practices as a barrister at the English bar, with reputation and success.

In the unequal contest of this season, Mr. Dawson had to encounter many insurmountable difficulties; with a small theatre, inferior company, and contracted resources he had to contend against a great and popular favourite, at the head of a number of excellent performers, crowned with uncommon success, and whose well replenished treasury enabled him to accomplish objects beyond the reach of his opponent.

However, that industry which characterized Mr. Dawson's Management, did not desert him at this juncture. He got up the Jubilee with much care and cost; in which he introduced Mr. Astley and his performers, then exhibiting in Dublin; this drew him some money. The

School

School for Wives, then acting in London with ſucceſs, furniſhed another inſtance of his aſſiduity: he produced and played it at Capel-ſtreet ten nights before Mr. Ryder could get it ready. In vain he advertized it in rehearſal, with a promiſe of preſenting it in the moſt perfect ſtate: the public embraced the firſt opportunity, and it was of material advantage to Mr. Dawſon. At length it came forward, ſanctioned by the Earl of Harcourt, Lord Lieutenant, when it brought ſeven or eight good houſes. The following is the manner in which it was filled at each houſe.

	Capel-ſtreet.	*Smock-Alley.*
Belville,	Mr. Leſtrange,	Mr. Wilks,
General Savage,	Mr. Mitchell,	Mr. Heaphy,
Captain Savage,	Mr. Kennedy,	Mr. Fletewood,
Leeſon,	Mr. Layton,	Mr. Sparks, jun.
Torrington,	Mr. Hollocombe	Mr. Vandermere
Spruce,	Mr. Dawſon, jun	Mr. O'Keefe,
Connolly,	Mr. Dawſon,	Mr. Ryder,
Miſs Walſhingham,	Mrs. Simpſon,	Mrs. Sparks,
Lady R. Mildew,	Mrs. Durravan,	Mrs. Lee,
Miſs Leeſon,	Miſs Danby,	Mrs. Miell,
Mrs. Tempeſt,	Mrs. Maxwell,	Mrs. Brown,
Maid,	Mrs. Barrett,	Mrs. Price,
Mrs. Belville,	Mrs. Moore.	Mrs. Fitzhenry.

Mr.

Mr. Layton was a young gentleman who had been in the army. Miss Danby was afterwards Mrs. Tyrrell.

In the midst of this struggle, whilst Mr. Dawson was using every effort to maintain his ground, he received an unexpected and undeserved stroke, which sensibly affected his future operations; a conspiracy of which he had not the most distant idea, in a moment deprived him of eleven members of his community, who without the least previous notice, early one morning in the latter end of January, set off in a body to Portarlington, where with the assistance of a few others, they formed a company and opened a small temporary theatre. Though there were few amongst the revolters of any eminence, yet the loss of such a number, when he could ill spare one, was a material inconvenience, and naturally affected his future operations.

What remains to be said of Capel-street theatre, at this time, may be comprized in a few words. Notwithstanding every effort which a fertile genius could devise, or unremitting industry could effect, Mr. Dawson plainly perceived the absolute necessity of bending to the

pressure

preſſure of the times, and declining, at leaſt for the preſent, an oppoſition which he could no longer ſupport with prudence. He accordingly adopted the moſt eligible mode his circumſtances would admit of. He ſhortened his ſeaſon conſiderably from his original intention; commenced benefits directly, and early quit the field to his more fortunate adverſary.

CHAP. XIX.

Mr. Ryder's continued success.—The Deserter.—Rope Dancers.—Gentlemen performers.—Tony Lumpkin in Town.—Cymon.—Mr. Waddy's appearance.—Mr. Ryder exhibits a ridotto.—The plan of it.—Mr. Astley's exhibitions.—The Corsican Fairy appears on the stage.—The latter season.—Mr. and Mrs. Barry and Mr. Aickin.—Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkely.—Mr. Smith and Mrs. Hartley.—Their different success.—Review of the season.—Conclusion.

LET us now turn our eyes on Mr. Ryder, whose prospects each day brightened, and whose views each day extended. His theatre exhibited a pleasing, busy, bustling scene, where crowded houses sweetened nightly toils, and public patronage amply recompensed each well meant effort. The Lord Lieutenant also frequently visited Smock-alley, and whilst his presence added

added fashion to its circles, increased his own popularity.

The musical entertainment of the Deserter made its first appearance in this kingdom at that time, and was most favourably received. Its intrinsic merit, pleasing music, and the excellence of its performance entitled it to this reception. Mrs. Sparks's Louisa was much noticed, Mr. Vandermere's Skirmish added greatly to his reputation.

Amongst the variety and novelty produced this season were the Sieur Powlaskie the Polander, Monsieur Bissant on the Slack Rope, and an animal company of performers consisting of three monkies, a hare, a dog, and a horse, who under the direction of the Sieur Mc. Crowskie, performed a petite pantomime; but it must be confessed, without any great share of public approbation: on the contrary, they were soon consigned to places better adapted to such exhibitions, and obliged to give place to entertainments more suited to the nature of a theatre.

About

About this time, a number of gentlemen of the army and navy, associated for the laudable and benevolent purpose of performing a number of plays and farces at Smock-alley, the emoluments arising to be applied to charitable uses. For the benefit of the Meath hospital, the Hibernian school, the relief of soldiers wives and children, &c.

The design, which was truly noble, fully answered each intent. The first night of their performance was the Constant Couple and Miss in her Teens, with an occasional prologue, written and spoken by Major Riddisdale, when the theatre was so crowded, even behind the scenes, that there was scarce room to get on or off; and so highly in the opinion of the audience did these gentlemen acquit themselves in their respective characters, that during a repetition of their performance for seven or eight nights, the house was filled with rank and fashion. The Stratagem was acted six nights, The Devil to Pay often. Amongst the gentlemen who distinguished themselves on this honourable and humane occasion, was Major French, whose theatric abilities stood the test of the severest criticism.

criticiſm. His Scrub and Jobſon will be long remembered, as excellent pieces of acting.

Mr. O'Keefe, the exuberance of whoſe fertile genius had ſeveral times before manifeſted itſelf in occaſional jeu d'eſprits, and petite pieces, brought out his Tony Lumkin in town for his benefit at this time. This farce was ſeveral years after produced under the auſpices of Mr. Colman, in the early part of his management at the Haymarket, and though it was far from being the beſt of his performances, yet it prepared the town for that ſpecies of dramatic writing, which till then they had been unacquainted with.

And here I cannot help obſerving, the many obligations the public are under to Mr. Colman, ſen. for cheriſhing, cultivating, and directing a genius which has ſince added ſo much to their entertainment. I think I can venture to affirm, that to the great judgment of this excellent manager, (one of the beſt the ſtage could ever boaſt of,) in adviſing, correcting, and preparing Mr. O'Keefe's firſt productions, and in afterwards exhibiting them in ſuch a ſtate of perfection,

we

we are indebted for a succession of many of the pleasantest pieces that enrich the drama.

The popular dramatic romance of Cymon, always a favourite, was at this time acted with renovated strength. Mr. Michael Arne, the composer of the music, was at this time in Dublin, and under his direction it was again brought out with great care and attention. Much of the original music was restored, several songs were new set. Mr. Ryder played Cymon; Mr. Wilder, Linco; Mr. Mahon, Merlin; Mr. Vandermere, Justice Dorus; Mrs. Pinto, Urganda, Mrs. Sparks, Fatima; and that elegant little warbler, Mrs. Arne, formerly Miss Wright, made her first appearance in this kingdom in Sylvia. Thus powerfully supported, it was highly received and brought several houses.

Amongst the theatrical candidates of this time, at Smock-alley, Mr. Waddy distinguished himself so as to deserve particular notice. His first character was Philotas, in the Grecian Daughter. His success in this induced him afterwards to attempt Dumont in Jane Shore, the duke in Measure for Measure, Menes in the new Tragedy of Sethona, Cassius in Julius Cæsar, and several

 others,

others, in which he acquired reputation, and was considered as a promising actor.

He continued at Smock-alley for the remainder of the present, and the whole of the ensuing season. Hereafter we shall find him an active agent in the fortunes of the new theatre in Fishamble-street.

The success which Mr. Ryder had experienced, and the weight of public confidence which he enjoyed, inspired him, at this time, with the idea of a new species of entertainment. This was a kind of masqued fancy ball, or ridotto.

Crow-street theatre had been shut up during the winter, notwithstanding the earnest solicitations of several persons to have it opened. But as soon as Mr. Ryder had formed this new scheme, he resolved to fit up this house for the occasion. It was therefore immediately repaired, painted and decorated for that purpose.

This exhibition, however, appears to have suffered very considerable delays, and to have undergone many alterations, before it could be brought to maturity. It was first advertised under the title

of

of a Fancy Ball, and the plan propoſed was by ſubſcription. There were to have been ſixty ſubſcribers, at ten guineas a piece, each ſubſcriber to have eight tickets for the admiſſion either of ladies or gentlemen.

But, probably from want of ſucceſs in the ſubſcription, and finding the plan propoſed not ſufficient, it was ſome time after, changed. The entertainment was then deferred 'till a later day, and advertiſed under the name of a ridotto ball. Tickets for this were to be had at a guinea each, which in all probability, was found a more productive plan than that by ſubſcription.

It was announced as under the ſanction of the Lord Lieutenant, and Mr. Ryder had the addreſs to engage the ſupport of the Duke of Leinſter, the Counteſs of Shannon, Lady Newnham, and many others of the firſt rank. Indeed, the exhibition, at the ſame time that it was a matter of pleaſure, proved alſo a ſcource of utility, as every perſon who was admitted was to be dreſſed in Iriſh manufacture.

The ſucceſs of this project, was ſuch as might have been expected, from the patronage under

which

which it was brought forward. It took place ſome time in May. The crowd of perſons of faſhion was ſo great, that Mr. Ryder was reported to have cleared upwards of a thouſand guineas by the ſcheme.

Much about this time, we find Mr. Aſtley and his whole family exhibited in various ways, in Dublin. Amongſt the reſt of his amuſements, Mrs. Aſtley propoſed to entertain the public by exhibiting a ſwarm of bees upon her arm, ſo cloſely compacted as to form altogether a ſtriking reſemblance to a lady's muff. With his uſual activity, Mr. Aſtley had alſo a muſeum of curioſities, going forward at the ſame time.

To reſiſt and in all probability counteract the influence of his exhibitions, the royal forces, beſides tumblers and rope dancers, received the powerful aid of a great little Phœnomenon, called the Corſican Fairy. The tragedy of Henry the Eighth was got up, and in the coronation of Anne Bullen, "the part of the Champion" is announced to be performed "by Maria Tereſa, the "amazing Corſican Fairy, who will make her "public entry riding on the learned horſe, after "which ſhe will deſcend and move a minuet

"and

"and dance a new Corsian jigg upon a table.
"This wonderful phænomenon is but 34 inches
"high, weighs but 26 pounds, and is allowed
"by all who have seen her, a perfect beauty.
" She speaks Italian and French with the greatest
" vivacity and elegance."

However the lovers of *curious sights* might have been gratified by the appearance of this little lady, it must be confessed, the admirers of Shakespeare could have no great reason to rejoice at her introduction into one of his most celebrated tragedies. But we must be at some loss in which point of view most to admire the ingenuity of the contrivance, whether in regard to the happily suited figure of the chosen champion, or to the appropriate nature of the exhibitions which he was announced to display. A champion of 34 inches high could at best inspire us with but little opinion of his prowess or dignity, but we must utterly lose all sight of both, when we behold him *mounting a table, to dance a Corsican jigg.*

For the consistency of the proceedings as well as for the gratification of those cognoscenti who beheld this amusing spectacle, it is much to be regretted,

that the celebrated little count Borowlaſki, was not cotemporary with this lady, to have joined both in the fight and in the dance. The dignity of tragedy would then have been uniformly ſupported.

Yet ſuch are the wretched reſources to which a manager is frequently driven, not from choice, but from neceſſity, in order to counteract the rage of ſome ſimilar attraction and to preſerve public attention.

However, it muſt be confeſſed that the latter end of the ſeaſon amply retrieved it's credit. The number and excellence of the performers who were brought over, was uncommonly great. This will ſufficiently appear by the mere repetition of their names. They were Mr. and Mrs. Barry, Mr. Aickin, Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkely, and Mr. Smith and Mrs. Hartley.

Nor would it be fair to paſs over in ſilence the merits of honeſt Bob Aldridge. He alſo at this time, viſited his native country, and during his ſhort ſtay, delighted his ſpectators with all the various excellencies of Iriſh groteſque dancing: a ſtile of exhibition, in wich he has never been ſurpaſſed.

But

But of the ſeveral great names above enumerated, the ſucceſs was, as might perhaps have been expected, different. The merit of Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkely was univerſally acknowledged. The firſt characters in comedy they had long ſupported, with the higheſt reputation. On this occaſion, however, private conſiderations ſeemed to fruſtate public ability. The connection between them was not of the moſt moral kind, and ſome recent tranſactions had excited ſtrong prejudices againſt them.

They made their firſt appearance in Benedict and Beatrice, in which, notwithſtanding their confeſſed merit, they had the mortification to experience public neglect and inattention.

Exactly in the ſame predicament ſtood Mr. Smith and Mrs. Hartley. Their merits were conſiderable; but their ſituations were nearly the ſame, and their ſucceſs was proportionate.

Mr. Smith was a gentleman of reſpectable family, connections, and education, and of riſing reputation in his profeſſion. His firſt character was King Richard. Mrs. Hartley was poſſeſſed of at leaſt ſome of the leading requiſites for attraction.

attraction. She was of a lovely face and an excellent figure, advantages which, with the aid of novelty, might have been expected to have proved ſucceſsful. But the fate of theſe tragic ſtars was not more auſpicious than that of the comic luminaries already mentioned.

Perhaps it might be owing to the ſuperior attraction of Mr. and Mrs. Barry, as much as to any thing elſe, that theſe failures took place. It has been always experienced, that in Dublin but one object of favour can be ſupported at one time. In this caſe, it is not to be wondered at, that the very ſuperior abilities of Mr. and Mrs. Barry, and their eſtabliſhed fame ſhould have born down all competition.

At all events, ſuch was the fact. Their firſt appearances were in Lear and Cordelia, two characters than which none, I may venture to ſay, were ever more capitally repreſented. They were alſo very conſiderably ſupported, in their ſeveral repreſentations, by Mr. Francis Aickin, whoſe abilities have always rendered him an acceptable viſitor on theſe ſummer excurſions.

During

During the ſtay of Mr. and Mrs. Barry and Mr. Aickin they performed moſt of their favourite characters, and with a ſucceſs which compenſated for any other deficiencies. The coffers of the theatre were amply repleniſhed by their acquiſitions.

With ſuch performers, and with ſuch eclat, was the ſeaſon of 1774 concluded, on the 16th of July, with the Grecian Daughter, and Midas, for the benefit of Mr. William Barry, treaſurer.

The review of this ſeaſon, will ſhew it to have been one of the moſt ſplendid ever known in this kingdom. Whatever might have been the occaſional ſtruggles of the contending parties, whatever the diſappointment of ſome individuals, the public cauſe was amply provided for. The entertainments, upon the whole, were excellent, and the emoluments of the prevailing party, very conſiderable. At no time has the town been preſented with a greater variety of excellence: at none, has it more liberally rewarded it's providers.

Upon

Upon the whole, the season of 1774 may be said to have exhibited the Irish stage in a light of respectability, which has been seldom equalled, perhaps never excelled.

FINIS.